

Exploring a Cultural Intervention's Influence on Sense of Belonging:
Bringing Dakota Story into 6th and 10th Grade Social Studies Classrooms

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the Dakota youth who participated in this study.

Abstract

Research has determined the importance of sense of belonging on one's health and well-being. Furthermore, sense of belonging has been correlated to academic success. The persistent academic achievement gap in the American Indian student population afflicts both educational policy makers and classroom teachers. This community-based participatory action research project drew upon the recommendations of the American Indian community to establish partnerships with American Indian communities and the inclusion of American Indian representation in curricula. This project utilized a mixed methodology to investigate the pilot of a cultural intervention (i.e., a culturally-based curriculum built upon storytelling) in sixth and tenth grade social studies classrooms and explored its influence on American Indian student's sense of belonging. The results also assisted in improving the curriculum and effectively meeting the state's new mandate that calls for the inclusion of American Indian contributions in curricula.

Key words: sense of belonging, storytelling, Dakota, Indigenous.

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

Utuhu Can Cistinna sat quiet. Well into her forties, she wondered to herself, “*Maybe, just maybe I carry the same strength of Tasina Susbeca Win (Her Dragonfly Shawl Woman), my great-great grandmother.*” Through family writings and her *deksi*’s (uncle) keen memory of family history, Utuhu Can Cistinna learned that *Susbe*, as she was commonly referred to, was born a twin around 1850 at Pine Island. Her *tiospaye* (extended family), part of Chief Wabasha’s band, revered the historic Dakota village site in *Mni Sota* because it was surrounded by white pines and the *Wazi Ozu Wakpa*, translated as Pine Grove River. This area provided the Dakota people a safe haven during harsh winters. Unfortunately, it had been lost during the 1851 Dakota Treaty. Now moved to a reservation, *Susbe* grew up with the *Mdewakanton* band near the Lower Sioux Agency where the Rice Creek joins the Minnesota River. Here, she along with other Dakota, were encouraged to adopt white ways, including farming and Christianity. *Susbe*’s family maintained many of their Dakota traditions, including gathering the sacred pipestone in southwestern *Mni Sota*. One summer day, her grandfather and others were on their way back home from quarrying, their wagons full of pipestone, when they saw smoke towards the direction of home. Upon their return, they learned that a war had begun, spurred by crooked traders and US government officials. After a number of events, her family and other Dakotas fled their homelands and headed northwest towards the Red River Valley. Utuhu Can Cistinna mulled the following story over and over in her head, trying to imagine herself at twelve years old, the same age her great-great grandmother had been. She grabbed her great grandfather’s writing again and read aloud:

One morning a company of soldiers all of a sudden came into sight to fight them. This was a surprise attack. Everyone immediately left the camp and ran across the ravine and took shelter in the timber; men, women, children and all. Then men took their guns with them as they knew the soldiers had come for a fight. When they got over to the woods, they found that the men had forgotten a sack of bullets for their guns. They did not know what to do. Finally your grandmother volunteered to run back across the ravine and get the sack of bullets. She ran across the ravine and up to the tents and grabbed the bag of bullets and as she was running back to the timber the soldiers began shooting at her and several bullets came very close to her.

Over the next few years, Utuhu Can Cistinna continued to read, research and listen to *Deksi* tell her family stories. She contemplated why she had never heard any of the history behind the stories in all her years of schooling. In fact, most of what she could recall was memorizing the U.S. presidents and their great heroic efforts, with little to no recollection of American Indian history. Her face grew warm, as she remembered how much she loved *Laura Ingalls Wilder* and remembered running home after getting off the school bus to make it in time to watch it. Not that they weren’t entertaining, but she now recalled that the *Little House* books were one of the only places she remembered reading

anything about Indians – smelly Indians. Her thoughts shifted to the prejudiced taunts in school she endured and how she had wished she could disappear. While Utuhu Can Cistinna’s dad was white, there was no mistaking her mother’s Indian heritage she inherited. The ongoing conversation she frequently had in her mind during her early years resurfaced, that she was somehow in a place she didn’t quite belong. She sighed deeply, grateful because those thoughts were now less frequent occurrences. She thought about what was worse – to be invisible or be reminded you don’t belong.

To belong is a basic human need and motivation for all people (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Chiang & Maslow, 1969; Maslow, 1970; Maslow, 2013). Literature on sense of belonging dates back to Durkheim’s work in 1897 on suicidality and a sense of not belonging (Durkheim, 1951). He identified a connection between sense of belonging and suicide when he proposed that sense of belonging is an indicator of connectedness and has an inverse relationship to suicide. Durkheim’s early work on sense of belonging was limited to the field of sociology and specifically related to religion, labor, and suicide. Much of what is understood today regarding sense of belonging derives from Maslow’s self-actualization theory (Maslow, 1943). Maslow explains that when physical and safety needs are met, individuals will emerge to the next tier of needs; love, affection and belongingness. When love, affection and belongingness needs are met, individuals will ascend to esteem and finally to self-actualizing. Self-actualizing is the full development and use of one’s qualities, capacities, and abilities (Maslow, 1970). Maslow describes self-actualizing individuals as those that are driven through higher motives, more mature, expressing rather than coping, and more easily themselves around others. In a sense, those that are self-actualizing, are those that carry out their *work* because it is a part of who they are, and they believe their work is something bigger than themselves. Maslow identified common qualities and attributes among self-actualizers: “Perception of reality, acceptance, spontaneity, problem centering, solitude, autonomy, fresh appreciation, peak experiences, human kinship, humility and respect, interpersonal relationships, ethics, means and ends, humor, creativity, resistance to enculturation, imperfections, values, and resolution of dichotomies” (p. 128).

In determining what motivated the self-actualizing person, Maslow (1970) emphasized an asset-based approach, which materialized as the Hierarchy of Needs. The Hierarchy of Needs includes an ascending order of needs, those needs required in order to

ascend towards self-actualizing. The deficiency needs or motivators include physical needs, safety, sense of belonging and love, and respect. The fulfillment of meeting the hierarchy of needs supports self-actualization or the development towards a person's truest human potential (Maslow, 1970; Maslow, 2013). The hierarchy of needs is interdependent of each other and self-actualization is dependent upon meeting the other needs. His self-actualizing theory influenced the field of psychology and continues to be widely discussed.

There have been a number of researchers, theorists, and behavioral scientists who have built upon the original theory of self-actualization. In fact, the original hierarchy of needs have been expanded to include cognitive, aesthetic, and transcendence needs (McLeod, 2007). Conversely, early criticism emerged due to the lack of empirical evidence supporting Maslow's need hierarchy theory, specifically his classification of needs and gratification and lacking clear definitions of constructs (Steers & Porter, 1983; Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). Several studies argue that Maslow's order of hierarchy of needs is not universal due to individual and cultural differences (e.g., income levels, origin of country) (Diener, Ng, Harter, & Arora, 2010; Mook, 1987; Tay & Diener, 2011). Specifically, individual and cultural differences can influence the specific order of fulfillment of needs or how individuals or communities evaluate life. In other words, an individual may achieve sense of well-being without having fulfilled physical or safety needs (Diener, Ng, Harter, & Arora; Tay & Diener). Being aware of these differences in the paths that lead to self-actualization can further our understanding of how self-actualization is supported.

Maslow's work in his self-actualization theory legitimized the concept of sense of belonging and catapulted future research. Sense of belonging is specifically within the third tier of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and yet, sense of belonging is foundational to so many aspects of human life. Sense of belonging's significance and universality has led to the development of an instrument to measure one's sense of belonging. The Sense of Belonging Instrument (SOBI) measures both an antecedent and psychological component of sense of belonging (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995). Additionally, the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) was developed to measure belongingness within school

out of the growing understanding of the importance of sense of belonging in educational settings (Goodenow, 1993a). A large literature base demonstrates sense of belonging's significant relationships with a number of social, health, and academic correlations. Sense of belonging and its relationship to different populations (e.g., racial, gender, sexual orientation, first generation college students, and immigrants) has been examined (Durkheim, 1951; Finn, 1989; Goodenow, 1993a; Goodenow, 1993b; Maestas, Vaquera, & Zehr, 2007; Strayhorn, 2011; Strayhorn, 2008a; Strayhorn, 2008b; Walton & Cohen, 2007; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989).

Strayhorn (2012) identifies several definitions of sense of belonging, including terms such as “belongingness, relatedness, membership, community, acceptance, support and affiliation” (p. 8). There is not one clear sense of belonging definition and in fact, literature suggests that there is some disagreement regarding the definition of sense of belonging. Strayhorn encompasses and integrates existing literature on sense of belonging into seven core elements:

1. Sense of belonging is a basic human need;
2. Sense of belonging is a fundamental motive, sufficient to drive human behavior;
3. Sense of belonging takes on heightened importance in certain contexts, at certain times, and within certain populations;
4. Sense of belonging is related to, and seemingly a consequence of, mattering;
5. Social identities intersect and affect sense of belonging;
6. Sense of belonging engenders other positive outcomes; and
7. Sense of belonging must be satisfied on a continual basis, and likely changes as circumstances, conditions, and contexts change (pp. 18-23).

Extensive research literature on sense of belonging is discussed throughout this document and juxtaposed with sense of belonging through a Dakota lens.

Background of the Study

American education has been predicated upon absent narratives and exclusions with an ethnocentric perspective (King, 2003; Loewen, 2007; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2008; Spring, 2012). The emphasis on a Eurocentric education with little to no diverse stories, perspectives, or teaching and learning pedagogies, handicaps everyone (Pinar et al). A repressed American identity is reinforced through current curricula and

teaching and learning pedagogy. However, for marginalized students, absent narratives and an ethnocentric perspective also creates a lack of sense of belonging. This lack of belonging is troublesome because low sense of belonging has been linked to suicidality, other mental and physical health issues (e.g., anxiety, stress, and compromised immune systems), and low academic achievement (Anant, 1967; Anant, 1969; Anderman, 2003; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Durkheim, 1951; Farrell, 1990; Goodenow, 1993a; Goodenow 1993b; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Hatcher & Stubbersfield, 2013; Hill, 2009; Osterman, 2000; Solomon, Battistich, Kim & Watson, 1997; Walton & Cohen, 2007; Wehlage et al, 1989).

In the field of psychology, sense of belonging is an instrumental component to the theory of self-actualization (Chiang & Maslow, 1969). Maslow (1970) believed that proper, adequate, and timely satisfaction of the need for belongingness leads to physical, emotional, behavioral, and mental well-being. Recent researchers contend that sense of belonging is important to everyone because it is a basic human function, a component of well-being that leads to positive emotions, behaviors, and outcomes (Hagerty, Lunch-Bauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992; Strayhorn, 2012). An absence of belonging is, for those individuals who feel marginalized, a feeling of isolation and alienation from others (Maslow, 1970; Maslow, 2013).

Sense of belonging is paramount in the Dakota worldview. Specifically, through Dakota sense of belonging, each individual feels valued and is of value through a reciprocal and interdependent kinship system. Furthermore, oral tradition and literature suggests that storytelling, a Dakota tradition, plays a significant role in developing sense of belonging, fostering healthy identity development and thus, self-actualizing. However, historic U.S.–Indian policies have disrupted the traditional development of sense of belonging and further demonstrate systemic challenges and issues regarding educating American Indian students. This study will examine one specific issue within the plethora of potential challenges and solutions; the predominant monologue and pedagogy within our American education. The monolithic narrative dominating American classrooms and textbooks creates invisibility for so many, including American Indian people. Furthermore, Indigenous groups throughout the world, identify with the absence of

inclusive historic accounts, including those that feature the acts of oppression and those stories encompassing Indigenous views (McMurchy-Pilkington, Pikiao, & Rongomai, 2008).

Indigenous scholars emphasize the role of diverse story which includes Indigenous worldviews. For example, the Maori of New Zealand describe story as a reciprocal process of receiving knowledge from ancestors and transmitting knowledge, connecting both the old and the new (Bevan, 2012).

“Storytelling is as ancient as the language it uses” (Berger & Quinney, 2005, p. 8). Storytelling has always been a part of an Indigenous paradigm, which includes ways of being, ways of knowing, ways of inquiry, and ways of transmitting knowledge. The significance of story is evident in American Indian cultures (e.g., Archibald, 2008; Bruchac, 2003; Cajete, 2005; Dion, 2008; Eastman, 1971; Eastman & Eastman, 1990; Hill, 2006; Nerburn, 1993; Standing Bear, 1988; Zitkala-Sa, 2003). Storytelling connects the past, present and future, where all voices are heard and respected. Storytelling collects history and main events of family and community. It is a means to preserve and transmit stories of ancestors (Nerburn; Sorensen, 2012; Standing Bear).

Storytelling has occurred throughout Dakota history from time immemorial. The oral tradition of storytelling maintains stories of creation, history, teachings, values, and a rich and unique knowledge about people, place, and culture. Storytelling is a method of education that captures the mind, creativity, and imagination of both the listener and teller. Storytelling is an integral part of the Dakota culture.

Stories are not just entertainment, but give us purpose to being, while providing ways of knowing and understanding (Bevan, 2012). Storytelling has a way of eliciting awareness and perceptions and lengthening our experiences infinitely. We are a part of the stories, thus stories are alive. We all have story and in fact, “The truth about stories is that that’s all we are” (King, 2003, p. 2).

Everyone has story. Story has found favor in the eyes of those writing biography, memoirs, and genealogical story. Professional storytellers are now considered legitimate professions. Storytelling is a means for healing that can address rootlessness and a separation from kin (Berger & Quinney, 2005).

Storytelling has found a place in qualitative research as inquiry methodology. Narrative as social inquiry emerged from the social sciences and humanities fields as a research method that included narrative, narrative analysis, stories, and storytelling. Analytical narrative's orientation is rooted in positivist epistemology, attempting to maintain neutral and independent, building off existing theory and using a reductionist analysis of data (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). However, critics challenged the notion of universal truth derived from positivist's theoretical position (Maynes, Pierce, & Laslett, 2008). Utilizing narrative inquiry from a social constructivist epistemology, the researcher or listener, seeks meaning and understanding from the narrative or story itself and furthermore, from an ethnographic view, includes their own voice and understanding, as participant (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Gall, Gall, & Borg). From the point of Indigenous theory, storytelling, testimonies, and other narrative methodologies are rooted within a decolonizing approach (Smith, 1999). This approach is less about determining a universal truth but certainly, within an Indigenous epistemology, each individual's reality is truth and multiple realities and truths exist. However, decolonizing methodologies are more about utilizing storytelling and narrative methodologies as the means and procedure to address the problem a researcher is seeking (Smith). Thus storytelling can be used to address absent narratives. Storytelling can become the means, and in this research focus, the intervention of which to address the monolithic story within American social studies classrooms.

While story is a way of lived experience inquiry, story is also about constructing identities and finding meaning in our lives (Berger & Quinney, 2005). Narrative inquiry helps make meaning of life experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Through stories, "we remember, we rework, and reimagine the past, reflect back upon ourselves, and entertain what we have and could become" (Berger & Quinney, p. 5). Narrative inquiry also contributes to identity development theory (Denzin & Lincoln). Narrative inquiry supports the construction of sense of self within historic and social constructs, thus connecting the process of narrative analysis to the work of human agency and social action (Maynes et al, 2008). Furthermore, narration as lived experience can assist in constructing not just identities but meaningful selves and shape realities (Denzin &

Lincoln). Identity development is especially important when we look at narrative and story and its potential impact on sense of belonging.

Sometimes, stories can change over time, lending to possibilities of the future. For example, collective stories about marginalized or oppressed peoples can demand social change (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Stories from marginalized and oppressed people are important as we look to address deeply embedded stories that are threaded through historical and social constructs (Maynes et al, 2008). The storyteller or narrator draws upon their identity, sense of self, and agency from their perspective (Maynes et al). The problem with a monolithic narrative is it becomes a public and institutionalized narrative, and the agency that is connected to individual story becomes social narrative. Though, storytelling is not just about the storyteller. It is also about the listener, who either rejects or validates story, and also contributes to the story (Berger & Quinney, 2005). Furthermore, storytelling can actually be influenced and in part constructed through the collective social narrative. Narrative analysis in research has been impactful when reviewing counter narratives. Thus counter stories address socially and historically-embedded constructs. Storytelling and narrative inquiry within qualitative research has played a significant role in providing counter narratives, especially to Western historical, political, and social disciplines (Maynes et al).

Storytelling has long found a place in pedagogical teaching and learning fields (Bage, 1999). Storytelling has been a part of formal education for some time, especially in teaching literacy (Eades, 2006). The benefits of storytelling are extensive; including eliciting creativity, inquiry, listening, reading, comprehension and writing skills, and offers a diverse and multi-sensory component for learning. It also supports inclusivity of learners, those from different backgrounds and abilities (Eades). Additionally, topic-based teaching, a storytelling methodology, utilizes stories for students to make several connections across multiple disciplines (Eades). Storytelling is also found in social studies. For example, the construction and deconstruction of historical accounts turns into a school's history course (Bage). The historian, whether it is the teacher or textbook, becomes the storyteller. Storytelling holds the attention of listeners far beyond listing a

set of facts and dates. However, the ability to tell stories from more than one perspective is essential (Eades).

We cannot dispute that we *all* have story. Story does not just inform the listener of broader and diverse truths but affirms the narrator's truth. My story matters; I matter; I am of value; I belong. The reclamation of storytelling and thus nurturing belongingness in youth; purports significant implications in education.

Statement of the Problem

Sense of belonging has already been determined to be integral to self-actualization and well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hagerty & Patusky, 1995; Hagerty, Williams, Coyne, & Early, 1996; Maslow, 1970). Research provides adequate basis for the significant role sense of belonging and membership has on education, the development of youth, and school success (Anderman, 2003; Goodenow, 1993b; Ma, 2003; Osterman, 2000; Osterman, 2010; Sánchez, Colón, & Esparza, 2005; Uwah, McMahon, & Furlow, 2008). Much of the research on sense of belonging focuses on correlative studies that indicate its influence on academic achievement, identity development, marginalized students, health, and suicidality. However, researched interventions are lacking on how to increase sense of belonging within education systems and structures. Furthermore, sense of belonging takes on intensified meaning for marginalized students (Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; Farrell, 1990; Goodenow, 1993b; Maestas et al, 2007; Strayhorn, 2012; Walton & Cohen, 2007). Understanding the heightened importance of sense of belonging for marginalized students is important when reviewing the disparities in educational data on American Indian students. In Minnesota, a significant gap exists for the adjusted cohort graduation rates between American Indian students (42% and 45%) and white students (84% and 84%) for school years 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively, ranking the worst state in serving American Indian students in the nation (Stetser & Stillwell, 2014). For school year 2012-13, Minnesota climbed to just 49 out of 50 states in graduating American Indian students (49%) in comparison to white students (85.3%) (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2015, Table 2). The persistent gap in graduation rates for American Indian students and the role that sense of

belonging has on education and marginalized students necessitates the voice of the American Indian community.

American Indian communities and leaders have been calling for change in school structures and systems, with specific recommendations. The National Advisory Council on Indian Education (NACIE) and the National Indian Education Association (NIEA) recommends that schools partner with local American Indian communities in order to plan, design, and coordinate the education of American Indian students (NACIE, 2013; NIEA, 2013). Furthermore, literature on American Indian education strongly suggests the inclusion of culture based education (Brayboy, 2013; McCarty, 2011; Phillips Indian Educators [PIE], n.d.). The call for these two specific recommendations and the correlative literature on sense of belonging, suggests a potential connection in perhaps addressing social, health, and academic gaps for American Indian populations. However, there exists a gap in research connecting Indigenous based teaching and learning methods as a cultural intervention and their influence on sense of belonging for American Indian students.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the influence of a cultural intervention (i.e., culturally-based curriculum) on sense of belonging for American Indian students. However, the school wanted to know how the cultural intervention affected all students. Thus, we examined the influence of the cultural intervention on sense of belonging for American Indian and Euro-American students. Storytelling is the foundation of the culturally-based curriculum because it is a Dakota teaching and learning methodology and it supports the inclusion of Dakota narrative in the curriculum. The curriculum was developed by Dakota Wicohan, a Minnesota Native non-profit organization with the collaboration of Dakota scholars, educators, elders, and supportive mainstream educators. The primary purpose of this study was to gain insights into the role that a cultural intervention has on influencing sense of belonging on American Indian students. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of this study included a secondary question that sought to evaluate the use of a culturally-based curriculum and its alignment with Minnesota's social studies standards requirements based upon teacher perceptions.

Research Questions

1. Does the cultural intervention (i.e., culturally-based curriculum) influence sense of belonging?
 - a. Does the cultural intervention influence American Indian students' Psychological Sense of School Membership?
 - b. Does the cultural intervention influence American Indian students' sense of belonging in the General Mainstream Community?
 - c. Does the cultural intervention influence American Indian students' sense of belonging in the Dakota Community?
2. Does the culturally-based curriculum meet Minnesota's new social studies standards?
 - a. According to the perceptions of social studies teachers, did the Dakota teaching and learning method of storytelling support the transfer of Minnesota's new social studies standards?
 - b. According to the perceptions of social studies teachers, did the inclusion of Dakota narrative align with Minnesota's new social studies standards?

Significance of the Study

It is important to the field of educational research to determine the influence of a cultural intervention on sense of belonging for American Indian students. Research on cultural interventions such as Indigenous storytelling and narrative are needed. Specifically for Minnesota, it was important to evaluate the pilot project of a culturally-based curriculum and its influence on sense of belonging for American Indian students and teacher's perceptions regarding the alignment of curriculum to Minnesota's social studies standards.

This study explicitly supported American Indian students, those students who have been marginalized by the general Eurocentric focused curricula in American education systems and classrooms. This endeavor was significant, considering that marginalized students are most affected by a lack of sense of belonging than non-marginalized peers.

Finally, this study was significant for Minnesota educators with the passage of new social studies standards requiring the contributions of Minnesota tribes, the Dakota and Anishinaabe. Beginning in 2013-14 academic year, Minnesota schools are required to include American Indian history, perspective, culture and narrative within social studies classrooms (Minnesota Department of Education [MDE], 2011).

Definition of Terms

Dakota: The Indigenous peoples of the central plains which includes Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Montana, and Canada. While commonly referred as the Sioux nation, Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota are preferable since the word Sioux is not part of their language. Dakota loosely translates as ally and Deloria (1998; 2009) provides further illumination by describing O Dakota (the state of Dakotanness) as in a state of peace or peaceful. The Dakota Oyate (nation) encompass the Oceti Sakowin (seven council fires or bands) (Oneroad, 2003; Westerman & White, 2012). The bands differ in geography and language dialects, the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota (Deloria, 1998; Oneroad; Westerman & White). The Dakota communities of Minnesota encompass the eastern Dakota bands; Sisitonwan, Wahpetonwan, Wahpekute, and Mdewakantonwan. Today, four federally-recognized Dakota communities in Minnesota exist; the Upper Sioux, Lower Sioux, Shakopee Mdewakanton, and Prairie Island (Indian Affairs Council, 2012).

Indigenous: Originating or occurring naturally in a particular place. Indigenous people are those that identify as original inhabitants of a particular land. The term Indigenous means relating to Indigenous people and is inclusive of first peoples (Wilson, 2008). According to The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Indigenous people are self-identified and accepted by their community, have a continual history prior to colonial or settler eras, have a geographical territory, have a distinct social, economic, and political system, have a language, culture, and belief system, are non-dominant groups within society, and resolve to resolve to maintain their distinct environments and systems as a separate people (United Nations, n.d.).

Relationality: A common term used in the discourse of Indigenous epistemology and by Indigenous scholars. It is best described by Indigenous scholar Wilson (2008), “If

Indigenous ways of knowing have to be narrowed through one particular lens, then surely that lens would be relationality. All things are related and therefore relevant” (p. 58).

Relationality describes not just relationships to each other but how everything is interconnected, interrelated (Battiste, 2002; Hill, 2006; Lavalley, 2009). All things are in relationship, therefore all things matter. With this understanding, the way that we interact with all things, including people, the land, all living things matter.

Assumptions/Bracketing

Prior to research, it is important to identify the researchers’ beliefs and experiences regarding the research topic. In particular, I did not care much for Minnesota or American history in high school. I considered history boring and did not connect personally to it. I specifically remember memorizing all the presidents and wondered of what significance this would have in my life. More importantly, I do not recall positive affirmations of American Indians in classrooms. If there was any mention of Indians, it was typically negative or historic and I felt as if I wanted to disappear. The lack of accurate and positive contributions of American Indians may have been pronounced in my schools due to very few American Indian students. Subsequent to my experiences of racial harassment due to being identified as Indian, I often felt as if I did not belong in school. These experiences influenced my interest in this field of study. I am a mother of three boys who have all attended public schools and am often disappointed in the lack of local Indigenous history, culture, and language within their education. Finally, as a Dakota activist, I am especially focused on language and life ways revitalization and had a research agenda to increase the sense of belonging for Dakota students. Subsequently, my ethnicity, experiences, and lens likely influenced my interpretation of the results.

Theoretical Framework

The civil rights of individuals, especially in terms of gender, race, class, and disability emerged in the 1960s and 70s in the United States. During the same era, Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire led an examination, critique, and discourse of liberation of the oppressed that emerged as critical pedagogy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Freire, 1970). Critical theory, and subsequently, Critical Race Theory (CRT) took hold as counter to post-positivist and constructivist theories (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln).

CRT is where this project emerged from, offering a counter-story to existing educational structures that have limited and oppressed American Indian students and other marginalized students. CRT, in particular, questions the postulations of American identity and its representations (Denzin & Lincoln). American education has taken a Euro-ethnocentric view of education (Howard, 1999; Spring, 2012). American Indians and other Indigenous peoples around the world have often been educated under colonialism, including boarding schools, thus Indigenous peoples' argument against a Eurocentric view of history has been rooted in providing counter-narrative (Haynes Writer, 2008; Smith, 1999). CRT seeks to achieve three goals; present counter narratives from the perspective of minorities, end suppression and recognize race as a social construct, and address gender, class, and areas of difference within racialized others (Creswell, 2013). Critical theoretical frameworks, inclusive of counter narratives assist in critically challenging the status quo in education. CRT's underpinning is that racism is prevalent in society. Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) furthers the goals of critical theoretical frameworks by distinguishing the complicated colonialism affects for American Indians that differs from other marginalized groups in the United States (e.g., the unique political and legal status of Indian tribes) (Brayboy, 2006; Haynes Writer). American Indians have been targeted more than any other racial group in the United States and in fact, the numerous treaties and policies developed have specifically attacked the political and legal systems and structures of tribal governance.

Since colonization of Indigenous peoples, Eurocentric pedagogies and their master stories have placed Indigenous knowledge as subordinate (Haynes Writer, 2008; Westerman & White, 2012) Contemporary education structures are nearly void of Indigenous histories, knowledge, languages, worldview, and pedagogies (Battiste, 2002). CRT and critical pedagogy have emerged out of immense public education and awareness, and serves to challenge standard practices. A counter narrative or product is often a result of the application of CRT. However, in some ways, CRT further emphasizes or gives credence to the conventional narrative by continually focusing, discussing, and responding to the currently accepted philosophy and pedagogy of American education. The application of Indigenous theory removes the need for counter

narratives because Indigenous theory purports that Indigenous knowledge has always existed. Regardless, the advent of CRT and TribalCrit has offered up the *other's* voice, including that of Indigenous scholars and serves as a stepping stone to addressing the status quo. By unleashing the suppression of Indigenous knowledge, mainstream education is afforded a fresh perspective on the reported problems and challenges of American Indian and Indigenous education. Battiste (2002) calls for serious consideration to balance current educational "legitimacy, authority, and disciplinary capacity with Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies" (p. 7). Indigenous knowledge systems have their own frameworks and disciplines that can be free of Eurocentric validity (Battiste). Indigenous theory steps beyond counter narrative, social change, and the general emphasis of negation, by including tenants of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, including storytelling.

Indigenous knowledge, epistemology, and pedagogy are irrefutably connected to land (Battiste, 2002; Meyer, 2001). Likewise, Dakota knowledge, ways of knowing, being, and understanding are tied to land. Westerman and White (2012) convey quite simply, "Mni Sota is a Dakota place" (p. 14). Indigenous knowledge is embedded within an extensive web of relations that form a circle of holism (Absolon, 2010). Holism refers to the interrelatedness between emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual segments creates a whole and healthy being (Archibald, 2008; Hill, 2006). Therefore, knowledge is not just an intellectual idea. Relationality is a common term used in the discourse of Indigenous epistemology and by Indigenous scholars. Relationality is an Indigenous lens by which asserts that everything is related, therefore, everything relevant (Wilson, 2008). Relationality describes not just relationships to each other but how everything is interconnected, interrelated (Battiste; Hill; Lavalley, 2009). Relationality and the balance of relationships is a Dakota foundation for ways of knowing (i.e., epistemology).

Furthermore, Indigenous scholars agree that respect, reciprocity, and relationality should guide Indigenous research. An Indigenous paradigm understands and respects multiple realities and relies upon our relationship with that reality (i.e., ontology) (Wilson, 2008). This approach is based upon a process of relationships to form a mutual reality and in this research project, an educational reality for American Indian students

and communities. Since honoring relationships are primary for Dakota people, this project's axiology is rooted in valuing those relationships. One's commitment to those relationships requires an accountability to respect and maintain those relationships, including researcher and the Dakota community (Wilson).

Indigenous teaching and learning pedagogies are commonly identified as a process of doing; for example, engaging in relevant and challenging tasks and experiences, ceremonies, and storytelling (Cajete, 2005; Deloria, 1998; Eastman, 1971; Meyer, 2001). A summary of characteristics of Indigenous pedagogy described by Cajete include:

- Sacred view of nature
- Integration and interconnectedness
- Relationships between elements and knowledge reflect a spiral process
- Reciprocity
- Cyclical spiraling for deeper understanding
- Life-long learning
- Learning reflects natural developmental and cultural processes
- Language is sacred
- Each person is of value and valued
- Ceremonies, traditions, community are respected and included
- Knowledge is from within
- Learning through participatory and reciprocal relationships
- Thought and language are powerful in creation
- Creates maps for life's journey
- Builds learning through tribal structures of family and community

Specifically, Dakota teaching and learning is all about connecting the child to all of creation, beginning with kinship. The commonly held phrase in Dakota culture, *Mitakuye Owasin*, loosely translated as *all my relations*, embodies the concept of relationality, directly correlating a reciprocal and interdependence of belonging. Sense of belonging is central within interdependent Dakota kinship structures. Similar to Maslow's self-actualization theory, sense of belonging is integral to self-actualizing within Dakota structures. To be self-actualized within the Dakota community is called *wowacinye*. Wowacinye can be defined as being reliable, accountable, and trustworthy, and its concept is directly linked to the community's interdependent relations. Thus sense of belonging for Dakota people is central to wowacinye. Storytelling is one method

through which Dakota sense of belonging is nurtured and is exhibited as an educational method within Dakota traditions. This research project, as well as the cultural intervention draws upon these Indigenous pedagogical concepts and characteristics.

Summary

These three theories, CRT, Indigenous theory, and self-actualization theory served as the underpinning to the research project. Discussion of how each supports, disputes, or limits specific conclusions are discussed throughout Chapter Two. The Indigenous teaching and learning pedagogical method of storytelling are liberally applied throughout the dissertation. Stories told by the researcher are included in Chapters One, Two, and Five to utilize and anchor an Indigenous framework for understanding. Storytelling served as the foundation to the project intervention so as to examine its effects on sense of belonging. In conclusion, this dissertation reflects the stories of American Indian students and community as participants.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

Pip! *Psipsi*'s mother quickly pulled the thermometer out of her mouth, "Hmmm...99.5, not much of a temp but still, better safe than sorry". *Psipsi*'s mother sent her to bed. She didn't mind, it was the most comforting place to be – in the worn out bed of *Ina* and *Ate*, where she slept every night. Her mother too busy to tuck her in, *Psipsi* gathered the patchwork quilt, rubbed the frayed ends between her fingers, wishing *Ate* was around. But he wouldn't be home for hours yet, closer to her bedtime. She frowned at the thought of it. At times *Psipsi* fell asleep before her father returned home from his job helping clear brush for highline workers. He didn't want to disturb her sleep by making room for both he and her mother. It was just easier to take the couch on those nights. *Ate* used to tease her, claiming to have slept in her old crib next to the closet. But now her little brother, not quite a year old took up the crib. A full house with only two bedrooms and seven people, *Psipsi* felt the center of attention when her father was around. So, despite her achy legs *Psipsi* was bound and determined to stay awake until he returned.

Psipsi'ceda *Wiciyanna*, (Grasshopper Girl) born in 1943, was the fourth of now five children. Their small but sturdy house on the small reservation, built by her father and family friends, was always busy with people coming and going. *Ina* was often found in the kitchen kneading dough or cutting up vegetables from the garden for bread and a pot of soup big enough to fill seven bellies. Her older brother, always on the go, teased *Psipsi* incessantly. Her sister, while only two years older than her, often left *Psipsi* to play by herself, claiming she was still just a baby and not old enough to play with her friends.

Psipsi, had just turned six years old and was anxious for fall to come, as she would join her brothers and sister at school. Even though she was excited, her tummy turned just a little, thinking about how her older sister had said she was too dumb to go to school. *Psipsi* shook her head at the thought of that, as if to shake off a pesky fly buzzing around her head. *Ate* had reassured her that it would soon be her time to climb the big yellow bus, make new friends and learn all sorts of interesting things. A slow smile emerged at the thought of making a friend. She would have a friend of her own. She could show her the new dress that *Ina* had made for her doll for her recent birthday and after that she would take her down to the creek and they could look for turtles and when it warmed up, and they could go swimming, and... *Psipsi* spent so much time daydreaming about her new friend that she didn't hear her mother creep into the room. "I thought you were asleep", she said with a streak of flour on her cheek, as she wiped her little brother's snotty nose with her apron. He was teething now with a constant runny nose and it only made it worse when he was tired as he smeared the snot across his face, trying to rub his tired eyes. "I'm going to lay him down for a nap while I clean up the kitchen. Just make sure he goes to sleep, don't be trying to play with him and keep him up". *Ina* had caught me too many times, playing with him instead of soothing him to slumber. "Oh-kay", I sighed. "When's *Ate* coming home?" *Ina* just looked at me and shrugged her shoulders and closed the door behind her. "*Misun – Aaaa – boo. Aaaa-boo*", I repeated over and over. Finally he lay down, rubbing his eyes and shoved his thumb in his mouth. I stretched out on the bed, "Ugh", I groaned. My legs were sooo achy and sore. I curled up, thinking about why I get such achy legs. *Ina* told me that it was because it was my body's

way of telling me when a storm was brewing. She said I could advise the Farmer's Almanac, whatever that meant. Ate told me because I'm always jumping around that they get sore sometimes. And then he goes on and tells me about my Dakota name, Psipsi'ceda Wiciyanna. Psipsi for short – which I suppose is fitting, since it means to jump. I do like to jump. I jump across rocks down at the stream. I like to jump in snow banks, piles of leaves, in mud puddles, from trees. Ate made me a jump rope from some old barn rope, just so I could jump rope, at least that's what he called it – "jump-rope", I repeated.

I'm thinking about all the places I like jumping when suddenly I hear the door creak open. Uh-oh, I squeeze my eyes shut tight, thinking Ina is going to catch me awake – she thinks I need to "rest my eyes" to make my legs feel better – which makes no sense to me at all. I wait, holding my breath and when I hear the door squeaking shut, I peak through the slits of my eyes and it's, "Ate!" "Shhhh..." he sneaks back in. I momentarily forget that Misun is sleeping in the corner crib and he makes a little baby noise but doesn't wake up. Ate slides next to me and I wrap my arms around his rough neck. He smells of thunder and rain and I whisper in his ear, "Is it already night time, Ate?" "Hiya. I'm home early because a big storm rolled in. *Tka, Micunksi*, what are you doing in bed?" "Ate, my legs ache again. I think Ina is right, I have Almanac legs", I answer. Ate stifles a chuckle and scoots me back into bed and sits beside me.

"Micunksi, I wonder what old *Iktomi* is up to today", he rhetorically asks. "He's up to no good Ate", I reply. Ate begins to rub my achy legs with his strong rough hands. They're warm and soothing despite callouses and scars he's acquired from his hard work. "Oh, *Iktomi*, he's been trying to find something," Ate whispers. "What's he looking for?" I whisper back. Ate taps his hand rhythmically on his worn out blue jeans, and begins to hum and tap a familiar *wacipi* song. He continues on, "*Iktomi* is searching. He climbs a hill, he looks under a rock, searching, searching. He can hear it. The song is getting a little louder. *Iktomi* is getting closer. He stops and peers through his sun-squinting eyes. He can see something on top of the next hill. He walks more sure of himself now and comes up to a white-bleached buffalo skull lying on the ground". Ate sings some more of the song, this time a little louder. I smile now, because the song sounds familiar. "*Iktomi* lays flat on the ground and peers into one of the eye sockets. He can see flies, many flies. They are all buzzing to the song and fly-dancing to its rhythm. *Iktomi* interrupts, 'Hey flies. I want to dance too!' 'Oh *Iktomi*, you cannot come in here and dance,' the flies tell him. But *Iktomi* is persistent and picks up the skull responding, 'I want to come in!' 'Iktomi, you are too big – you cannot fit inside here', the flies respond. 'Oh yes I can', *Iktomi* responds and promptly pushes the buffalo skull onto his head. 'See, yes I can, I fit,' muffles *Iktomi*. By this time, all the flies escaped out of the eye sockets and where there used to be a snout. *Iktomi* is left to himself singing". Ate sings and begins to soften his voice and pretty soon he's quietly humming the familiar song. "*Iktomi* stops singing and sighs." 'I'm bored, no one to sing and dance with now,' he muttered'. For all the flies had long flown away, looking for another small crevice to hold *wacipi*. *Iktomi* decides he's done singing and stands up and tries to pull off the buffalo skull, only to find it's stuck! He starts pulling and pushing with all his might. Pretty soon, *Iktomi* is frantic and swaying his head side to side, hoping to loosen the skull and tries again to pull it off his head. He begins breathing heavy and sweat drips down his neck. Still, it doesn't come

off. He keeps wondering around and after some time, he bumps into something. ‘Hey, what are you?!’ ‘Well, I’m *Utuhu Can*, oak tree. I’m the strongest tree there is.’ ‘Can you help me get this off of my head so I can see just how strong you are?’ replies Iktomi. ‘Nope, sorry – I cannot do that,’ humphs oak tree. So, Iktomi continues meandering over the hills and bumps into another. ‘What are you?’ ‘I am *Wahpopa*, willow tree. You can swing from my branches if you like’ ‘Well, I’d like to try that if you could help me get this skull off of my head,’ said Iktomi enthusiastically. ‘Sorry, I’m not able to help you do that.’ So, Iktomi continues on and he bumps into another. ‘Now, what are you?’ asks Iktomi. ‘I am *Canhasan*, Maple Tree. You can come back in the spring and tap me for sap.’ ‘I would likely do that if you could just help me lift this skull off of my head,’ answers Iktomi. ‘Well, I’m sorry I can’t do that.’ Iktomi begins to shuffle away, hanging his head in defeat. Canhasan yells back at him, ‘I’ll see you next spring!’ Iktomi completely spent, continues on, dragging his feet, walking for a long time and bumps into yet another. ‘Oh, hey, yeah, I’m sure you’re something that can’t help me,’ moped Iktomi. ‘Well, I’m *Hantesadan*, Cedar Tree. But you better step back Iktomi. I grow on cliffs and it’s dangerous. You shouldn’t come any closer’. And of course, this immediately intrigues Iktomi and he quickly forgets his dilemma. ‘Hmmm...Hantesadan, you say?’ as Iktomi faces Cedar Tree. He’s thinking and thinking – ‘Maybe if I climb up, I could peer through one of these eye holes and see where I’m at,’ Iktomi says out loud in a much more hopeful voice. Of course Cedar Tree hears him and responds, ‘No, no, Iktomi, that’s a mistake. Listen to me. It’s dangerous way up here.’ And of course, Iktomi begins to climb cedar tree. Sometimes his foot slips or cedar’s brittle branches break off, but he continues on, intent on climbing to the top. ‘Yes. Yes, I will make it to the top and I’ll be able to see far away and be able to figure out just where I’m at,’ Iktomi assuredly tells himself. Iktomi just about reaches the top and grabs one of the newer branches, too thin for Iktomi’s weight to hold. The branch snaps off and Iktomi falls. ‘Oh No!’ he yells, falling to the ground, Thump! And the buffalo skull cracks open. ‘Ah, much better,’ he says to himself, as he’s shaking his head as if to clear flies from his ears. Iktomi gets back up and resumes his intentional walk to nowhere in particular.

“Okay micunksi, time for bed. Another day we’ll find out where Iktomi wanders to next,” Ate says as he tucks Psipsi into bed. “*Tanyan nistima*,” he says as he shuts off the light. Psipsi yawns and snuggles down deeper into the covers, ‘Iktomi...you should’ve lis...’

Traditional Dakota Education

Traditional tribal education is a cultural and life sustaining process (Cajete, 2005) whereby each individual is interdependent upon the other through an intricate reciprocal kinship system (Deloria, 1998). In essence, Dakota education is about learning through relationship with all of creation. *Opiiciyapi* (ceremonies), *ecun* (doing), and *woyake* (storytelling) are traditional Indigenous forms of teaching and learning (Cajete; Deloria; Eastman, 1971; G. Wasicuna, personal communication, December 19, 2013). This form

of education supports self-worth through four foundations; belonging, opportunities to master competency, independence or autonomy, and generosity (i.e., fulfilling the reciprocal role of relationships) (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 1990). This chapter focuses primarily on storytelling and its role in developing and supporting a sense of belonging among the Dakota people.

Dakota Sense of Belonging

“We have always wanted belonging, meaning and a joyful life” (Meyer, 2010, p. 23).

In order to understand Dakota sense of belonging, it requires an orientation and understanding of Indigenous epistemology. Simply stated, an Indigenous worldview is based upon relationality and the belief that all relationships shape reality because of a belief in kinship to everything (e.g., the sun, moon, stars, trees, animals, birds and all human beings) (Absolon, 2010; Lavallee, 2009; Wilson, 2011). Dakota perceive themselves within universe and believe that all that exists is of value. Whereas, the western worldview is a human centered universe which places greater value on humans in comparison to everything else (Bruchac, 2003). The Indigenous relational orientation can be summed up as *Mitakuye Owasin*, loosely translated from the Dakota language, as *all my relatives*. It is so engrained within the Dakota culture, their prayers end with *Mitakuye Owasin*; an equivalent to *Amen*!

Sense of belonging is not a new idea to Dakota people. While Maslow (1970) identified sense of belonging in his self-actualization theory within the field of psychology and more recently, researchers have identified its significance in health, education, and other disciplines (Bay, Hagerty, Williams, Kirsch, & Gillespie, 2002; Hill, 2009; Inalhan & Finch, 2004; Jones, Patterson, & Hammitt, 2000; Kestenberg & Kestenberg, 1988; Ma, 2003; Newman, Lohman, & Newman, 2007; Winter-Collins & McDaniel, 2000 Young, Russell, & Powers, 2004), the Dakota culture and people have long asserted sense of belonging's importance in youth and identify development. For example, one way of fostering a sense of belonging within Dakota children is conveying the importance of their identity and role within the kinship structure (Brendtro et al, 1990). Deloria (1998) provides an explanation of how identity and roles were emphasized

through an intricate kinship system of the Dakota people. It was systemically and inter-generationally taught and adhered to, “kinship ties being that important, traced and remembered” (Deloria, p. 27).

While Deloria (1998) and Maslow (1970) both assert sense of belonging is fundamental to people and a motivator for influencing behavior, a distinct difference emerges when reviewing the placement of sense of belonging within Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and within Dakota individual and societal structures. From a Dakota cultural perspective, sense of belonging takes on a greater role, in that everything emerges from sense of belonging, radiates from it, and is interdependent upon it. In contrast, Maslow’s hierarchal model begins with physical needs at the bottom, then safety, and then sense of belonging, with one building upon the other in hierarchal order. Dakota sense of belonging begins first and foremost, right from birth. Sense of belonging is fundamental to Dakota identity formation by introducing and reinforcing your *wotakuye* (kinship) (i.e. who you belong to). For example, one would use a kinship term when addressing someone. This societal norm helps remind each of their respective responsibility and role, thus reinforcing a sense of belongingness even in simple conversation (Deloria; Deloria 2009). Likewise, when *Damakota* (I am Dakota) is understood, it is done so in relation to their significance within the *tiwahe* (family), *tiospaye* (extended family) and *oyate* (traditionally, conveyed the *oceti sakowin*, the seven Dakota council fires that made up a nation; today it also includes an individual tribal nation, reservation, or community). Through introductions, one identifies their family, the place they come from, and who their people are (i.e., who they belong to), all reinforcing their sense of belonging. Dakota sense belonging is a relational and reciprocal concept and again, right from the beginning, the beloved child, throughout a person’s upbringing and on into adulthood, is taught to be a good relative, somehow be related to everyone you know, be generous, be hospitable, keep *odakota* (peace) (Deloria, 1998). *Wodakota* and *Dakota wicohan* (living with Dakota values and living the Dakota way of life) were the core teachings and one must obey them in order to be a good Dakota; otherwise, one would no longer be Dakota (Deloria). All of these teachings are taught through ceremonies, stories, and by doing; an

informal but a fundamental education (Deloria; Eastman 1971; Eastman, 1990). For Dakota people, sense of belonging is inextricably tied to identity.

Sense of belonging and mattering to others is connected (Strayhorn, 2012). Within the Dakota worldview, belonging and mattering to family and community is essential to identities. Mattering within Dakota community is integral to the concept of *wowacinye* – whereby the community has faith in you and your contributions. One can count upon you; you are accountable and reliable through the sharing and serving of your strengths and gifts that Creator has given you. Wowacinye is equivalent to self-actualization, in that an individual has matured to a level of doing and living through their naturally-born talents and gifts for the benefit of the whole community. This reciprocal juxtaposition between identities, roles, and responsibilities aligns with the idea of mattering. Furthermore, its position within varied contexts is significant, including within Dakota family, extended family, and community. One can extend this idea with the concept of mattering (i.e., I make a difference, I matter), to Rosenberg and McCullough's concept of "ego-extension", (i.e. a feeling that others depend upon us) (Strayhorn, p. 69). For example, I matter to uncle, so therefore I will do what uncle expects and in turn uncle will be pleased. One can take this example and multiply it by 300 in order to gain a better understanding of the extensive kinship system of interdependent roles and responsibilities within the traditional Dakota community (Reclaiming Youth International, 2013). In the Dakota kinship system, all of one's aunts become mothers, uncles become fathers, cousins become brothers and sisters, close relatives become immediate relatives and distant relatives become closer. And if one could not determine them as a relative, they made them a relative (Brendtro et al, 1990; Deloria, 1998).

The feeling of connectedness as described is in alignment to *mitakuye owasin*, all my relatives or relations; a Dakota philosophical underpinning, that all is interrelated and all matter. When one understands that he or she matters, *ohodaic'iyapi* (respect for oneself and each other) and *woyuonihanic'iyapi* (act with honor and honor others) is achieved (G. Wasicuna, personal communication, December 19, 2013). The respect and honor for both self and other is similar to Maslow's esteem need and builds upon his definition of sense of belonging by indicating it is a social construct that provides

relatedness (Strayhorn, 2012). Strayhorn emphasizes five dimensions of mattering that further support a Dakota sense of belonging in relationship to others: attention, importance, dependence or reciprocity, appreciated or respected, and ego extension or believing others share in our success. Here, mattering and sense of belonging are completely tied to a relational sense.

As a deeper understanding of Dakota culture is achieved (e.g., kinship structures are more fully known and supported), other needs are met. For example, within Dakota culture, *wicozani* (overall well-being) is an interdependent relationship between physical, mental, and spiritual health (Peters & Peterson, 2015a). Belonging also supports *wowawanyake* (safety), *ohodaic'iyapi* and *woyuonihanic'iyapi* (respect and honor espousing esteem), and *wowacinye* (trusting in, reliance upon) (G. Wasicunna, personal communication, December 19, 2013). The Dakota cultural structure provides a reciprocal exchange between roles and responsibilities that supports an interdependent and pleasant life for all; one where everyone belongs and has purpose (Brendtro et al, 1990; Deloria, 1998). This intricate system of interdependency and reciprocity was pleasant and was a way of life that worked well (Deloria). The Dakota sense of belonging model aligns with Strayhorn's (2012) seven elements within the concept of sense of belonging that supports positive outcomes such as "engagement, achievement, wellbeing, happiness, and optimal functioning" (p. 22). In sum, the Dakota sense of belonging and all that it entailed resulted in positive outcomes.

How storytelling supports Dakota sense of belonging. "A fire is lit, burning a desire and passion to hear and learn more of ancestral stories and ways of doing and being" (Bevan, 2012, p. 137). Traditionally, cultural traditions, such as storytelling played a role in developing a healthy sense of belonging and identity for Dakota people (Hill, 2006; Wilson, 1996). The significance of self and their relation to others a person gains through an intricate kinship system of belongingness and knowing your relations, supports the theory that traditional storytelling can influence a sense of belonging.

Types of stories. Within the Dakota culture there are primarily two forms of story; *hitunkakanpi* (tales, traditions, legends and myths) and *wicowoyake* (history, narratives, and stories) (M. Defender-Wilson, personal communication, May 20, 2013). Creation

stories, depending upon story or storyteller can be considered either hitunkakanpi or wicowoyake; either way, continue through Dakota oral traditions of storytelling. In *Wigwam Evenings*, Eastman (1990) shares several creation stories, including Boy Man, who is the father of the human race, and was created by He-who-was-first-Created. In many American Indian creation stories, specific gifts from the Creator of each race are told (King, 2003). Creation stories help us understand and define the nature of our universe and how cultures understand their world (King). Dakota storytellers, Eastman (1971; 1990; Nerburn, 1993) and Oneroad (2003) share many hitunkakanpi stories that entail animals or the famous *iktomi* (Dakota trickster, meaning spider or the spider man) throughout Dakota legend. Trickster stories occur throughout Indian country, sometimes as coyote, raven, spider or other animals. The English translation to trickster is a limited one because of his diverse roles (e.g., as magician, prankster, shape shifter) (Archibald, 2008). The trickster is quite a character; “profoundly sacred and clever on the one hand and incomprehensibly stupid on the other” (Bruchac, 2003, p. 94). In order to grasp the trickster and the lessons he has to offer, one must accept the reality and possibilities of the trickster because his characteristics and situations he gets himself into are all possibilities within human experiences. The listener does not focus on what trickster looks like because trickster stories are more about the doing than being (Archibald). Trickster can be a savior or conversely, a profound lesson on how not to behave. Trickster stories reinforce cultural norms and identify cultural taboo.

Wicowoyake stories include history, migration, and genealogy of the Dakota people. Here again, the listener’s sense of belonging is supported in connection to ancestors and land. The storyteller’s role preserves history and legend (Eastman, 1990). The admiration of family and community heroes, honor of ancestry, and dedication to one’s people is gained through story (Eastman). These tales do more than enlarge the mind and stimulate imagination. For example, Smoky Day, one of the storytellers in Eastman’s youth, shares stories of his brave ancestors, connecting the young Eastman to positive Dakota traits; “Our heroes are always kept alive in the minds of the nation” (p. 101). Storytelling supports memory training and love and respect is gained by the storyteller (Nerburn, 1993). Deloria (2009) explains that there were some storytellers that

could recount three hundred winter counts without error all from memory. Today, hitunkakanpi and wicowoyake are kept alive through rare written accounts but primarily, Dakota families and communities continue to rely upon the oral traditions of gifted storytellers.

Why tell stories. Humans are not seen as the ultimate creation but actually the most flawed (Bruchac, 2003). Animals remember the original instructions from Creator, while humans often forget. Through observation and telling stories of animals, one is able to remember how to care for relatives. For example, Defender Wilson's (2001) story, *The Blue Heron that Stayed for the Winter*, reminds us how to treat one another with compassion, care, and hospitality. Again, iktomi and other American Indian tricksters are sometimes heroes, demonstrating the most admirable of characteristics for humans to emulate, and sometimes bad characters, committing the most egregious acts, reminding humans of what not to do. Either way, trickster stories bring understanding (Archibald, 2008). Trickster and animal stories are valuable because humans need reminding on how to live.

Dakota believe that the Creator is in all things. Story has roots to the past that lead all the way back to the source of all things (i.e., Creator). (Bruchac, 2003; Nerburn, 1993). Zitkala-Sa's (2003) story, *The Great Spirit*, embodies a rhythmic quality of poetry so vivid, through one's senses can imagine her experiences, "Yellow Breast, swaying upon the slender stem of a wild sunflower..." (p. 103). Zitkala's story continues, reconciling an internal conflict by embracing creation in order to overcome her personal experiences of prejudices, "The racial lines, which once were bitterly real, now serve nothing more than marking out a living mosaic of human beings" (p. 104). Stories are able to capture and remind one of the relationships with all of creation.

Stories also connect the past to the present, and offer a bridge to the future (Bevan, 2012). By learning one's history and family stories, helps make sense of the past and present, thus shape future realities (King, 2003; Wilson, 2011). Wicowoyake stories of relatives accomplishing great feats provide personal connections, thus resulting in belonging. Stories of ancestors demonstrate the passing of story from one generation to another. The captivating tale, *The Trial Path*, is one of murder and reconciliation through

forgiveness, results in teaching important cultural values and norms, from grandmother to granddaughter (Zitkala-Sa, 2003). Stories can also be as simple as learning the story behind a repeated tradition, bringing clarity to one's actions or as deep as discovering painful events of loved ones long gone, thus ushering in much needed compassion to reclaim and reconnect a shared past to a collective future. Stories bridge not only the past to the present and future, but link generations past to grandchildren yet to come. Stories reinforce relational connections, thus support sense of belonging.

When to tell story. Within Dakota traditions, storytelling occurred primarily during the long winter evenings, in part because much of the time was spent indoors. Evenings are also an appropriate time because it advances mystery (Nerburn, 1993). Today, in observance of oral tradition, hitunkakanpi stories continue to be told only when snow is on the ground, for to tell stories in the summer would invite snakes (Oneroad, 2003). Wicowoyake stories and those of personal experience are often told anytime. Since the publication of many American Indian stories, beginning with the first published American Indian autobiography in 1829 of William Apess, *A Son of the Forest*, and many others, including Dakota storytellers (e.g., Eastman, Standing Bear, Oneroad, Defender Wilson and Zitkala-Sa), one can choose to read or listen to a story at any time of the year, day or night.

Wakakans'a – storyteller. Storytelling is a gift. Storytellers are the keepers of knowledge. Stories are repeated over and over, the listener begins reciting over and over until the story is carved into the mind (Bevan, 2012; Eastman, 1998; Standing Bear, 1988). While the stories are repeated many times over, the storyteller may be different, the voice may have changed, and some of the details may change but the essence of the story never changes (King, 2003). Contexts, times, and people change, so does story change. In fact, trade and travel have supported the dissemination of stories, storyteller to storyteller, as stories are passed through this exchange. American Indian storytellers and histories are diverse, change, grow, with new layers, therefore stories change (Bruchac, 2003). Stories have a circular life and like a spiral, stories remain with us forever but change with time, storyteller, and context.

Storytellers remember that all things are connected. Dakota stories and traditions remind one to think about the consequences of seven generations forward, reflecting upon the legacy of seven generations past. Zitkala-Sa (2003) thought about her commitment and legacy of her past ancestors and future relatives by living out the values she learned early on and transferring them through her stories. It is the ability to look back and forward at the same time that makes a great storyteller (King, 2003).

Story examples. Stories are as diverse and complex as people. Stories can be about anything, including that of land. Indigenous people believe they are of the land (e.g. not owning or possessing land), and their stories reflect as such. Land and place is seen in relation to Indigenous people and stories serve as reminders that we are of this land. In *The Dead Man's Plum Bush*, Zitkala-Sa (2003) shares an interesting story about how on her way to a community feast, her mother stopped her from eating plums off of a nearby bush, "Never pluck a single plum from this bush, my child, for its roots are wrapped around an Indian's skeleton" (p. 32). The man was buried with his plum seeds (Dakota dice for gambling) of which a plum bush grew. Additionally, many stories convey place-based knowledge, including a story told by Eastman about *Minnewakan Cante*, later known to non-Natives as Devil's Lake, which has quite the opposite meaning. Through story, one is able to remember distinct features, origins, and histories of land. In fact, traditional Dakota names often contain story about land. Dakota family and individual names provide rich knowledge, history, and story (Zitkala-Sa).

Sometimes stories have a way of conveying what is sometimes so difficult to grasp, ushering in clarity and understanding. For example, for American Indian people, dreams can be sacred and very real (Bruchac, 2003) and represent messages from Creator and retold through story. In *A Dream of Her Grandfather*, Zitkala-Sa (2003) provides a deeper understanding how dreams are real and can even generate hope for the people. Thus, dreams can become a part of one's story. Stories can illustrate symbolic truth and metaphors and literal truth in how spirit exists in all things.

Outcomes and results of stories. Stories support positive outcomes the same way that sense of belonging does. Stories provide a way to socialize and provide entertainment (Bruchac, 2003). Comedy and laughter have always been a part of

American Indian people and their stories. Native people love to laugh (King, 2003; Mann, 2008). In fact, humor plays such an integral role in Dakota life, it is a way to overcome blunders and wounded egos and heal hearts. One can hear laughter amongst tears of stories of loved ones past told during Dakota funerals. Stories help welcome stories of good memories that nurture hearts and spirits among the bereaved.

The importance of stories is physiologically significant to how the brain learns. Stories utilize significant areas of the brain because it includes tapping into memories, ideas, actions, and feelings (Zull, 2002). Stories help to process information, bringing things to life and vice versa (Zull). The use of storytelling to enforce cultural empowerment, to strengthen cognitive skill development, and serve an artistic emotional expression has been shown to decrease drug and alcohol use in middle school youth (Nelson & Arthur, 2003). Furthermore, students who are required to grasp multiple perspectives produce higher levels of cognition (Sleeter). Zull recommends that, “we should tell stories, create stories, and repeat stories, and we should ask our students to do the same” (p. 228).

Stories strengthen values, educate, teach, and guide. Stories instruct how to act and why one should engage in good behavior (Bruchac, 2003; Wilson, 1998). Whether a hitunkakanpi or wicowoyake story, a good and entertaining story will have many teachings or lessons that remind listeners how to act. Eastman (1971) suggests that a good story should be known by heart and work to convey a lesson to the listener. In support of storytelling as a skill to be encouraged, Eastman describes a young boy’s responsibility as a duty to preserve and transmit the stories of his relatives and people. This developmental tool supported good listening skills, oratory skills, ability to balance criticism and praise, enlightened the mind, and stimulated ambition (Eastman, 2003). Stories challenged for deeper or broader understanding because the lesson or understanding is rarely told plainly but its meaning disguised within the story itself for the listener to determine. Eastman (1971) recalls being told during a story that, “I have come to a part of my story that few people understand” (p. 169). One of the tricks to telling story is to never tell everything at once but make your audience wait, keep suspense (King, 2003). Stories support students’ comprehension skills, including

prediction, anticipation, awareness of cause and effect, questioning, and an ability to make inferences (Miller & Pennycuff, 2008). Storytelling reveals and fosters creativity. Both wicowoyake and hitunkakanpi stories were and will be shared within Minnesota's classrooms through the *Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum*.

Stories help us remember histories, knowledge, teachings, and ways of life. Stories entertain, amuse, and capture the minds of young and old alike. Stories define, clarify, bring understanding and redefine our past, present and future realities. Stories serve as creative, engaging, interdisciplinary and intergenerational methods of educating and transmitting knowledge. Stories promote commonality. Everyone and everything is a story.

Disruption of Indigenous Education

Wihake, fifth born girl, was born in late August of 1912 to *Wakan Tio Mani Win* and *Wanbdi Ska* in Milbank, South Dakota, near her home reservation, the Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe. Her mother, *Wakan Tio Mani Win* means Spirit Walking in the House was from the Mdewakanton Dakota band. Her father, White Eagle, who was *wasicun*, was given his name from the Dakota people. He was respected and accepted as a Dakota, for he lived as one, even speaking Dakota. In fact elders today recall his chastising to speak Dakota, '*Dakota ia, wasicun ie sni!*' *Wihake* was raised by her grandmother, *Tasina Susbeca Win*, her father, and boarding school matrons, for her mother unexpectedly passed away when *Wihake* was not quite two years of age.

Shortly after *Wihake's* mother died, her father and family moved back to Minnesota, near Granite Falls. This area, the Minnesota River Valley is where her grandmother and other Dakota were resettling beginning in the late 1800s, after being exiled from their homelands. It was during the U.S. Dakota War of 1862 that *Wihake's* grandmother, *Tasina Susbeca Win* was around twelve years old, when her family fled to Canada. Not all Dakota fled, many were force marched to an internment camp at Fort Snelling where many died that winter. That same winter, 38 Dakota men were hung in the U.S.'s largest mass hanging in history. The following spring, some men were shipped and imprisoned at Davenport, Iowa and many women, children, and elderly were shipped to Santee, Nebraska. Subsequently, Congress abrogated all of the Dakota treaties and exiled the Dakota from Minnesota territory. All of these events contributed to the diaspora of *Wihake's* people. This is why *Wihake's* family has travelled back and forth, first to the Flandreau Indian reservation after leaving Canada, then to the Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux reservation, later what was once called the Brown Earth settlement, back to Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux reservation and then finally home to the Minnesota River Valley.

Wanbdi Ska, now a widow, was faced with raising five girls on his own. Thankfully, his mother-in-law, *Susbe* was able to help raise the girls. But times were tough for the Dakota people, including the small community of landless Indians, who

acquiesced into buying back some of their own lands and trying to make a meager living. Wanbdi Ska felt it was in the girls' best interest to acquire the education offered through boarding schools. Each of the girls attended the Pipestone Indian Boarding School in southern Minnesota. Wihake was often with her grandma Susbe, who was able to momentarily convince both Superintendent Mann and Wihake's father, that she was too little to attend school. However, in January 1919, Wihake entered the Pipestone Indian Training School, at just six years of age. Just as other Indian children, Wihake was discouraged from speaking her language. Perhaps her ability to mastering the English language came easier for her because she was treated just a bit kinder as her father was wasicun, after all. Wihake received academic and vocational training, including sewing, keeping house, laundry, and kitchen detail. At one point, because she was so young and small, her father issued a letter of concern that she should not be doing laundry detail just yet. Also, amongst her father's letters of concern to the superintendent was when one of her older sisters ran away from the school. And yet another complaint, when another sister complained of not getting enough to eat. It is doubtful that the Pipestone Indian Boarding School was any different than the many other Indian boarding schools throughout the country where runaways, illness, death, labor-focused, and homesickness were common occurrences. However the poor treatment and conditions of Indian children in boarding schools did not become publicly known until the Meriam Report to Congress in 1928. Either way, is unclear why her father pulled her and her sisters out of school, but Wihake only attended Pipestone Indian Boarding School for just a few years. Upon return, she and her sister *Wanske* attended the Granite Falls Public School, whereby she and her sister were the first Indians to graduate from its halls.

In 1932, while attending a social dance in town, Wihake met *TiWakan*, a *Sisitonwan* Dakota. He was the grandson of Chief Ti Wakan and *Tunkanmani Win*. His grandfather, Ti Wakan and his family, including then four-year old daughter, *Sagadasin* were on the historic forced march to Fort Snelling. This march enforced by the U.S. government on all of the remaining Dakota in Minnesota territory, whether or not they were involved in the U.S. Dakota War. Ti Wakan later became one of General Sibley's Indian scouts, searching for remaining Dakota who may have escaped. Ti Wakan and many remaining *Sisitonwan* Dakota, under the Treaty of 1867, were established as a tribe under the Lake Traverse Reservation. Ti Wakan was selected as head Chief of the tribe. His daughter, *Sagadasin* later married Philip LaBatte, the son of Mary Ironshield, *Mdewakanton* Dakota and Francois LaBatte, a half-breed Dakota/French trader who was killed during the 1862 war. Now his grandson, Ti Wakan was given his grandfather's namesake.

Ti Wakan, with friends had just stopped in Granite Falls on the way out to Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe's annual 4th of July pow wow when he met Wihake. They courted for a couple of years, while he worked in St. Paul, Minnesota. He finally married her in 1934, where they raised eight children and many grandchildren on their farm at the Upper Sioux Community.

It was Wihake's father, Wanbdi Ska that had helped the little Dakota community organize and in 1918 produced an Indian census for Superintendent Mann. This census would later be updated and in 1938, and the little Dakota community became federally-recognized through the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Through it, the community

would organize as the new Upper Sioux Indian Community established with 738 acres held in federal trust for the approximately ten Dakota extended families. Wihake's husband, Ti Wakan would later serve his community as respected Chairman. Later, his son, *Wasicun Hdi Najin* would serve as well. And later, while Ti Wakan wouldn't see this day, his granddaughter *Utuhu Can Cistinna* would serve as Vice Chairwoman as well.

Since both Wihake and Ti Wakan were Dakota speakers, they started out raising their children with the Dakota language. But as each entered public school, English was replaced in the home as well, except of course, when they didn't want their children to know what they were saying. Despite the new emphasis on English, *Mahto*, their oldest boy understood and spoke Dakota throughout his life.

None of Wihake's children spoke Dakota with her, other than her oldest son, Mahto and later Wasicu Hdi Najin, their third son, who taught himself the language. Later her granddaughter, *Utuhu Can Cistinna Win*, the daughter of *Psipsi'ceda Wiciyanna* would be a Dakota language learner as well. Though, Utuhu Can Cistinna's first request to learn Dakota from her grandmother was met with, "Oh, what do you want to learn that for? Just learn to speak good English", she persisted and a strong grandmother and granddaughter relationship grew from the newly formed teaching and learning duet.

Wihake taught her granddaughter many things, not just how to say everyday things using the language. She also taught her how to make bread, including fry bread, a food from government issued commodity days; today a common tradition. She also taught her how to make *waskuya*, a dried sweet corn, dried in the sun and stored in jars for making traditional soup. She taught her how to make wild plum and wild grape jellies from the fruits of the river valley. Their relationship grew and one day Wihake said, "Gee, I wonder why your mother never wanted to come back". Utuhu Can Cistinna thought of this and all the times that her mother had commented how she felt as if her family didn't want her. It was only later through her studies that she was able to explain to both that perhaps the misconceived perceptions were only due to one of the many government assimilation policies imposed on Indian families and communities. It had served not just as a tool of assimilation but also as a lost connection between mother and daughter. The Indian Relocation program of the 1950's – 70s, in an attempt to address reservation poverty, placed Indians in urban areas to learn vocations. Psipsi'ceda Wiciyanna, after dropping out of high school was a product of this policy. Her mother's good intentions of improving her daughter's life, had signed for her departure from home at age 17, accompanied by a man from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the cities. Through this new understanding, Utuhu Can Cistinna forged a stronger relationship between the three of them, grandmother, mother, and daughter, a serendipitous gift from wanting to learn the language.

Wihake's granddaughter would take her to funerals, to services at the little Indian church on the reservation, and sometimes just to drive around the countryside. Her visits always cheered Wihake up since she lived alone, as Ti Wakan had long passed away. As the years passed, Wihake served as advisor to a Native-led non-profit that her granddaughter co-founded, whose mission was to revitalize the Dakota language. And during the time her granddaughter served on the Upper Sioux Community's council, Wihake was one of the few elders recognized at a community celebration as being a

fluent Dakota speaker. Her granddaughter was pleased she could be the one honoring her for this recognition. And when Wihake had reached well into her 90s, her granddaughter interviewed her for a community language project, today being shared through the *Dakota Iapi Teunhindapi* documentary with many children, families, and communities across Minnesota. In her interview, she once again shares with her granddaughter recipes for a good Dakota life: eat a good diet, forgive others and just get along, speak Indian with your family, and laugh and enjoy your life. These lessons, along with many other Dakota elder's stories will be shared within Minnesota's classrooms through the *Mni Sota Makece Curriculum*. One of Utuhu Can Cistinna's last memories of Wihake, then 96 years old, were sitting in her hospital bed with her, as she sang one of her favorite Dakota hymns to her, explaining how beautiful the meanings are.

Wihake's life encompassed the rollercoaster of U.S. government Indian policies, including the assimilation era heavily impacting the education of Indian children. In fact, the consequences of Indian education both historically and contemporarily have been oppressive and depressing. Despite, Wihake's keen ability to maintain her extended family connections, the aftereffects and outcomes of Indian policies in general, have contributed significantly to the break-up of family, culture, language, tribal society, and social and community structures. The early abuses and traumas reported in boarding schools (Child, 1999) and those subsequent patterns of abuses and social ills continue to leave a feeling of hopelessness and despair within Indian homes, families and communities (Lambert, 2008). The internalization of cultural norms, other than your own, suggests a direct relationship to substance abuse (Mohatt, Fok, Burket, Henry & Allen, 2011). The decline and loss of traditional practices suggest a lack of belonging and positive self-identity of Dakota people (Duran, Duran, Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Yellow Horse-Davis, 1998; Hill, 2009). However, Wihake's story is also one of resilience and strength. Dakota cultural assets supported Wihake and her family to endure and in some cases, thrive despite the challenges acculturation has brought because of the significant impact of the assimilation era.

While Dakota communities' resiliency and strengths are evident, current education systems continue to be of great challenge for American Indian students with low graduation rates that have remained stagnant over decades. Academic achievement gaps persist for American Indian students, which can be summarized through an article, "No Child Left Behind leaves Native American's behind" (Orfield, Losen, Wald &

Swanson, 2004). Ultimately, American education has been used as a tool for Americanization, patriotism, and nationalism with overall educational goals to domesticate and civilize (Spring, 2012; Szasz, 1999). The effects of colonization have been detrimental on American Indian populations, specifically their connections to traditional values and life ways (Haynes Writer, 2008; Mohatt et al, 2011). Today, Indian educators are bombarded with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Race to the Top, Common Core standards and high stakes testing. All of these perceived solutions and means for improved education prevent the reclamation of Indigenous-based education. The current systems that exist, including how education is funded, delivered, and assessed make evidence-based education, such as Culture Based Education (CBE), difficult to practice (Beaulieu, 2012; McCarty, 2011). Current education trends support national uniformed content and assessment, which discourages opportunities for place based learning and local relevancy.

American identity has been infused into education and primarily American education has been predicated upon exclusions (Pinar et al, 2008). American education has been significantly Eurocentric and has left American Indian students invisible and with a lack of sense of belonging within education and society. When in fact, the United States has in part, been shaped by the legacy of American Indian nations (Kidwell & Velie, 2005; Loewen, 2007; Nabokov, 1999; Prucha, 2000). Often, education systems negate diverse story, which creates invisibility among populations. Not only is this a disservice to the invisible but also to the remainder of learners because they are not equipped to effectively participate in a diverse and global world. American education systems through cultural repression, exclusion, and erasure of Indigenous history, knowledge, and story have contributed to invisibility (Fine, 1991; Haynes Writer, 2008; Pinar et al; Sleeter, 2011) and a lack of sense of belonging in Indigenous youth. It is Indigenous story and knowledge that helps build a sense of belonging in Indigenous youth. As Howard Vogel (2001) explains, stories from ‘others’ are destroyed because they’re in conflict with the dominant master narrative and until we reconcile that conflict, our collective story is incomplete (Westerman & White, 2012). Not only do missing stories from education perpetuate invisibility and a lack of sense of belonging, but half-

done stories, much of which has been written by non-Indians, is erroneous (Peacock & Wisuri, 2010; Sorensen, 2012). This legacy, despite still existing, goes largely unnoticed. Furthermore, a Eurocentric-focused education thereby denies even Euro-American students to understand themselves fully because their very existence is dependent upon American Indians and other minority and ethnic populations (Pinar et al). A feeling of invisibility for racially and ethnically diverse students persists due to a monolithic curriculum that pervades our American education (Fine; Pinar et al). All education should be grounded in anti-racism and a move towards liberation, freeing both the oppressed and the oppressor (Freire, 1970; Haynes Writer, 2008; Sleeter; Spring, 2012).

The Breakdown of Dakota Sense of Belonging

Like a slender tree, I had been uprooted from my mother, nature, and God. I was shorn of my branches, which had waved in sympathy and love for home and friends. The natural coat of bark which had protected my oversensitive nature was scraped off to the very quick. Now a cold bare pole I seemed to be, planted in a strange earth. (Zitkala-Sa, 2003, p. 97)

While Wihake's story is not unlike many stories of American Indians, it is important to note that not all American Indians experienced education the same, nor hold the same perspectives. However, Bruchac (2003) provides an abbreviated colonialist story of American Indians and the arrival of Europeans, "Whites were welcomed; Whites responded with aggression and ingratitude; Indians were forced to resist; White weapons and disease overcame resistance; Indian nations decimated; Reservations established; Boarding schools; Loss of language and life ways" (p. 11). While neatly condensed, personal story provides a much deeper and interesting context and understanding. Story can help move knowledge to knowing and knowing to understanding. Consequently, what does this story have to do with sense of belonging for Dakota people and what does it have to do with education?

It is important to understand American Indian history and its impact upon Dakota people, the past and current social and political structures that govern them, and the kinship structure that supported sense of belonging. Similarly, it is important to understand this history and its implications on mainstream Americans and the social,

political, and racial structures that govern collective attitudes and behaviors (Sleeter, 2011). The historic Indian policies issued by the U.S. government attempted to eradicate the intricate kinship systems of Indigenous people and it is through this understanding, Dakota people often feel a lack of belonging is understood. Maslow (1970) best describes how Dakota people could feel a lack of belonging due to loss of land and disruption of its intricate kinship system, “the feeling of rootlessness...has been perpetuated by the collapse of traditional groupings, the diaspora of community and families” (p. 20).

Sense of belonging and identity are connected (Abrams & Hogg, 2006; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 2004) and for Dakota people, sense of belonging is fundamental to Dakota identity formation. Furthermore, for Dakota people, storytelling is integral to a sense of belonging and the stories heard are internalized. King (2003) provides a litany of images that suggest the kinds of stories we tell ourselves every day, many perpetuated through media, including countless mascots and stereotypes that are evident throughout American life (e.g., Edward S. Curtis’ images of stoic Indians, Pocahontas and *My grandma was a Cherokee princess*, sit *Indian-style* and Indian summers, Apache helicopters and Cherokee Jeeps, cowboys and Indians, Land O’Lakes butter, savage, red-blooded Indian, Indian scalps and Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, full-blood Indian and *Kill the Indian, save the man*, fluent speaking Indian, reservation Indian, urban Indian, *you don’t look Indian*). What kinds of stories are told through these imageries and supported in the American master story?

American Indian people have been coerced into giving up their own stories and images in order to be *seen* as Indians (King, 2003). Most often, if Indigenous peoples are included in curricula, they are imagined in the past (Sleeter, 2011) (e.g., warring, living in tipis, wearing feathers, and looking very stoic and noble). This imagery is not only false and perpetuates stereotypes that often lead to a view of an extinct Indian but causes harm to Indian people themselves (Fryberg, Markus, Oyserman, & Stone, 2008), who then are never able to live up to a fictitious image. Furthermore, American Indian history has most often been written by white, male historians providing a version of history based upon a white, male perspective (Loewen, 2007; Wilson, 1996).

Social identities do, in fact, intersect with the idea of sense of belonging, including those socially-constructed identities by others. The images and stories contained in media and master stories do not just affect American Indian students, they can be internalized by non-Indian students and teachers alike. For example, Strayhorn (2012) explains that some teachers hold negative perceptions and low expectations of certain student groups that can be internalized, which in turn does affect student perceptions of self and behaviors, commonly called the *self-fulfilling prophecy* (Madon, Jussim, & Eccles, 1997; Merton, 1948). American Indian students' sense of belonging is acutely meaningful for those who perceive themselves as marginalized within schools. Strayhorn further suggests that racially and ethnically diverse students whose sense of belonging is especially important due to cultures that require allegiance to community and kinship relations, need to find supportive means to continually negotiate ways to maintain those supportive networks. Sense of belonging can serve as both, a motive for academic and social behaviors and a protective measure for Dakota students. So, how can we challenge the stories that limit and hinder sense of belonging for students?

American Education's Hegemonic Pedagogy

American education has predicated upon promoting a monolithic American identity to support the educational goals of nationalism (Haynes Writer, 2008; Pinar et al, 2008; Spring, 2012). Specifically, American history has been absent of diverse narratives, retelling a history that emphasizes Euro-American heroism, progression, and power (Sleeter, 2011). A feeling of invisibility for racially and ethnically diverse students persists due to a monolithic curriculum that pervades the American education system (Fine, 1991; Pinar et al). In turn, this monolithic story creates invisibility for American Indian students and a lack of sense of belonging within education and thus, American society. The invisibility of American Indian and other marginalized and racialized people are a direct result of people in power, primarily Euro-Americans, deciding what resources are being used in schools. This form of oppression, distorts not only the oppressed, but those who dominate as well (Freire, 1970; Pinar et al; Powell, 2013). Exclusions are made known through the stories and histories told in school (Pinar et al; Powell). Watered-down versions or what others have coined as *white-washing*, leads to

fragmentation of American identity for all (Pinar et al; Powell; Sleeter). One of the goals of education has been and continues to be grounded in nationalism and providing representations of American identity (Pinar et al; Spring). However, the stories maintained are riddled with denial and uphold fantasy and fiction. The continuation of this curricula is harmful to everyone, not just the *racialized* other.

While there are some efforts in portraying diversity within education textbooks, Sleeter (2011) discusses how this only provides marginal results and states that racism is acquired actively and that curricula should address racism directly. Stories that challenge the master narrative and institutionalized racism, and address outcomes of democracy for all need to be embraced. Stories of teachings and reconciliation are also needed in order to support a movement of forgiveness and an ability to transform grief into positive action (Bruchac, 2003). Story can serve as a means to move beyond dichotomies that have limited all.

When society excludes or designates individuals or groups as other, and thus are outside the circle of belongingness, they are not afforded the same wealth of opportunities provided to those that belong (Powell, 2013). Wise (2007) writes and speaks of the invisibility of racism in America's political structure that should call our political leaders to address the role that race has on health, education, and housing. However, little attention and perhaps broad denial of the impact that simply race alone plays can be attributed to white privilege (Wise). One of the central issues of this country's history has been about determining who belongs and who does not (Powell). For example, American Indians often exist in currently-held historic narratives (e.g., romantic or noble savages), or they may be labeled as barbaric (e.g., warring) to help society distance them from within the circle, or as heroes if they are in alignment with the American narrative. If society is not willing to tell another story, one grounded in empathy, then it is an indication of an unwillingness to come to terms with relationships with Indigenous peoples and that current structures remain unfixed (Dion, 2008; Powell).

Turning the Tide

Multi-cultural and racial text within curriculum has an important role for all students and it decreases racism (Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Pinar et al, 2008; Sleeter,

2011; Spring 2012). Education should be *the practice of freedom* (Freire, 1970). The noble efforts that multicultural education (MCE) has attempted to address in education, has unfortunately fallen short of this goal.

Pinar et al (2008) discusses the role MCE and multiculturalism has had in curricula over the decades through the voices of several scholars. In particular, McCarthy (1993) provides a succinct progression of multiculturalism that emerged from an assimilationist pedagogical framework for education. Multiculturalism, as labeled during the 1950s and 60s was impacted by the racial civil unrest and subsequently the demands for restructuring school curricula. This in turn was rearticulated into professional discourses around issues of minority failure, cultural characteristics, and language competencies (Pinar et al). During this time, congress also became educated about the devastating impact of Indian students due to historic Indian education policies, with a call for the inclusion of American Indian culture and language (Senate Special Subcommittee on Indian Education, 1969). The discourse in education remains inundated by academic achievement gaps by race.

Next, cultural understanding programs surfaced as a means to eliminate racial prejudice and increase sensitivity. However, these particular programs have yielded a modest reduction in prejudice (Pinar et al, 2008). McCarthy (1993) provides a potential explanation for this model of diversifying curricula, in that the cultural understanding programs often focus on ethnic differences, which may perpetuate racial stereotypes. Additionally, while diverse content may have been added, Euro-American perspectives and standards remain intact (Sleeter, 2011).

A cultural competence model emerged, which focused on developing cultural competency in cultures other than one's primary association. Bilingual and ethnic studies grew out of this era, supporting cultural and linguistic preservation. This model focused upon minority students, and while able to maintain their cultural ways of knowing, they were and continue to be expected to prepare themselves for mainstream culture. Seeking balance of two curricula (i.e., mainstream and their home culture), while noteworthy, is not reflective outside the classroom, where mainstream culture rules and students must learn to conform to it.

Finally, the cultural emancipation model mirrors the affirmation of minority identity and adjoins the idea that academic success will emerge as a result of a positive self-identity, an outcome of studying one's history and culture. The problem with this model is that it stops short of understanding that circles beyond the classroom have not addressed racism or its impact on economics (Haynes Writer, 2008; Sleeter, 2011; Spring 2012). As expertly described by Powell (2013), the roots of racism and its connection to equality in academic and economic spheres is based upon a social construct (e.g., belongingness).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Lucero (2011) discusses three approaches researchers take when attempting to create interventions for American Indians. The *culturally adapted intervention approach* uses empirically based practices, created in mainstream America, and then re-packages or culturally adapts the interventions to fit American Indians. The *culturally-based intervention approach* designs interventions for specific American Indian cultural groups. These two approaches produce practices that have cultural content or cultural activities; however, the intervention is conceptualized, designed and evaluated from a Western theoretical perspective. If Indigenous curriculum is included in mainstream education, the field needs to be aware of the Eurocentric monopoly that has permeated education and its role in racism (Battiste, 2002; Howard, 1999). The *cultural intervention approach* utilizes culture as the intervention. Cultural intervention approaches use cultural pedagogy (i.e., teaching and learning methods that are relevant to the Indigenous students). Furthermore, Indigenous theory of what constitutes healthy growth and change, guides the development and evaluation of the intervention (Allen et al, 2011).

Call for Curriculum Change

There often exists a lack of connection to the currently-held American history for Dakota children and many other underrepresented and marginalized communities in the United States. Freire (1970) states it quite simply, "Education is suffering from narration sickness" (p. 71). Unfortunately, not only is the application of master narrative an exercise in memorizing static content and often repeating that content without meaning as an evaluative indicator, the hegemonic narration is void of the diversity of story from the

very students sitting in the classroom. Sadly, this type of education supports domination through propaganda, albeit often without the teacher's intention. This type of education supports the continuation of racism and oppression of which is reflective of the reality outside the classroom. Furthermore, students of color may inherit different forms of sociocultural capital, *note, not deficits*, other than what is valued in schools. Thus, racially diverse students are forced to acquire a "second curriculum" that they must master in order to fit in (Strayhorn, p. 29). The sociocultural capital that is rewarded within education systems, tend to reflect a Eurocentric view. In contrast, diverse sociocultural capital is devalued, which sends an intrinsic message of not belonging for the learner (Fryberg & Leavitt, 2014). Schools need to acquire a diverse curriculum that allows the *other* to fit in.

Education must begin, in the very least to include a more complete voice, one that includes diverse story, with the goal of serving as an impetus for liberation. We could and should tell story that meaningfully connects us all as a part of humanity and eliminates the idea of otherness (Pinar et al, 2008; Powell, 2013). As educators, we must work to create environments where all students' sociocultural capital, including their history, language, and cultural identity is valued and one can feel a sense of belonging.

Indian Education Policies

There are numerous national and state reports on how NCLB has failed American Indian students. Since 2005, according to the National Indian Education Association and the National Advisory Council on Indian Education, several reports and policy agendas, including those submitted annually to congress, have addressed the problems with NCLB and its effects on American Indian students. Primarily, six themes or recommendations are apparent throughout, with documented research and supportive American Indian and teacher testimony throughout the nation. The recommendations include: 1. Strengthen American Indian participation in planning, developing, implementing and evaluating Indian education; 2. Include American Indian languages and culture within curriculum and education; 3. Provide resources for American Indian teachers (severe shortage of American Indian teachers); 4. Increase the access to American Indian student records; 5. Encourage tribal and state relationships (recognition of tribal sovereignty); and 6. Ensure

funding parity (NACIE, 2013; NIEA, 2013). Additionally, throughout NIEA's supportive research literature, an ongoing discourse for supporting CBE is substantiated and confirms that American Indian students academically perform better when CBE is used (Brayboy, 2013; McCarty, 2011; PIE, n.d.).

Minnesota Indian education policies. In Minnesota, the need to focus on solutions for addressing the academic achievement of American Indian students is apparent. In 2011, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) procured a report, "Indian Education for All", after gatherings occurred between Minnesota's tribes and state education officials, in an effort to build better tribal and state relationships (MDE, 2012). The tribal and state working group identified primary insights that focus on recognizing tribal sovereignty and trust relationships (Bowman, 2013). This concern has been persistently voiced by tribes. Additionally, this thematic finding aligns with NIEA's identified recommendation of encouraging tribal and state relationships. There have been several advancements related to the tribal and state Indian education working group, including securing and ensuring a continual role of an Indian Education Director at the state level. A unique Minnesota state report, the Native American Student Achievement Report, (MinnCAN, 2013) focused on successes and innovation occurring throughout the state. The shift away from the negative statistics of the American Indian achievement gap provides a qualitative inquiry into three Indigenous-based best practice sites. The report identified Indigenous-based best practices as American Indian language inclusion, real time data, relationships between the school and American Indian parents and community, establishing high expectations, and a commitment to collaborating with the American Indian community or tribe. The report further investigates the perceptions of successful American Indian students by asking, "What helps you be successful at school". This qualitative inquiry-based report produced similar themes identified within the literature on Indigenous-based pedagogy and include: relationships, relevance, asset/strength-based, and cultural competence (Brendtro et al, 1990; MinnCAN; PIE, n.d.; Wilson, 2008).

Another report, *State of Students of Color and American Indian Students Report* produced by the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership (MMEP) in 2012 highlighted

the educational disparities in Minnesota. The report further summarized the role and use of culturally relevant practices:

Based on emerging cross-disciplinary research including early cognitive development, organizational structure, and identity development, intelligent urgency of systemic change promotes the role that cultural relevancy and competency can play in empowering everyone to go beyond being isolated “heroes” within a flawed system to actively shaping what systems can do to achieve both race equity and excellence. (p. 17)

It is apparent that our education system not only has played a role in the devastation and continued disparities among American Indian populations, but could offer a significant role in addressing factors that support the restoration of sense of belonging in American Indian students.

Minnesota’s new social studies standards. Minnesota adopted a new law in 2007, requiring, “the contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities as related to the academic standards” (Required Academic Standards, 2007). Since then, ongoing administrative review and update cycles continue for each of the content areas (J. Winkelaar, personal communication, July 10, 2014). In 2013, Minnesota began requiring all schools to adopt and implement the new social studies standards that requires the inclusion of American Indian history, cultures, perspectives, and contemporary issues. While readily supported by social studies teachers, the adoption of the new social studies standards has spurred much discussion, some controversial, including by Republican leaders who requested Minnesota’s governor to veto the passage of the new standards (Ragsdale, 2012). In fact, oppositional argument to the standards consists of a de-emphasis on “American successes and American patriotism” (Ragsdale, 2012, p. 1). Despite some political objection, Minnesota schools were required to implement new social studies standards, beginning with the 2013-14 academic year.

The Minnesota Historical Society heeded the coming of new social studies requirements with the writing of a second edition of *Northern Lights: The stories of Minnesota’s past*. The text begins with a different tone, asking “What is Minnesota?; Different Lives, Shared History; and What is Your Story?” (Kenney, 2013). It includes a

significant amount of content about Minnesota Indians, including early Dakota, U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, boarding schools, and sections that include Dakota voices during the Vietnam War, civil rights, and contemporary issues. While the text has not been purchased by all Minnesota schools as of yet, many teachers and schools are seeking training and guidance to implement the new standards. Dakota history, cultures, and contemporary issues have not been taught in the past. Therefore, unless teachers have taken American Indian studies courses within their college teacher training, many are teaching material that is new to them.

Implementing Indigenous Teaching and Learning Methods in Public Schools

“In a legitimate democracy, belonging means that your well-being is considered and your ability to help design and give meaning to its structures and institutions is realized” (Powell, 2013, p. 5). When implementing Indigenous knowledge into mainstream educational systems; respecting Indigenous language is paramount (Battiste, 2002). For within the language, a connection is found to all that is, a connection to all of creation. Furthermore, integrating Indigenous language into curricula must be accompanied through an Indigenous pedagogy. The danger in overlaying Indigenous language into mainstream epistemologies is that the Eurocentric worldview found in mainstream epistemology is re-emphasized with a devaluing of Indigenous worldview (Lucero, 2011).

While critical race theorists would advocate for a decolonizing approach to mainstream education, Indigenous theorists would advocate for a reclaiming of Indigenous teaching and learning methods. Some may argue that they are one in the same. However, Meyer (2001) makes a suggestion that moves directly to an Indigenous pedagogy, “We are beginning to understand that Hawaiian education is not something in relation to a western norm, but something we must define in relation to our own understanding of ourselves, our past, and our potential” (p. 146). This best conveys the idea that one need not lead with negating in order to rid ourselves of a colonial education to validate Indigenous teaching and learning.

Utilizing Indigenous pedagogy in the classroom requires utilizing Indigenous ways of knowing, including stories (Battiste, 2002; Smith, 1999). Indigenous people have

been confronting colonization, specifically the systemic erosion and loss of Indigenous languages and knowledge, utilizing critical theories as an impetus to address inequalities and injustices within our education systems (McMurchy-Pilkington et al, 2008; Smith). The important work of Indigenous language and life ways reclamation cannot be understated. In a recent study, use of Dakota language revitalization strategies related to an increased sense of belonging and decreased historical loss symptoms experienced when thinking about historical losses (Peters & Peterson, 2015b). Furthermore, research reveals that the use of American Indian culture and language provides students a buffer to discrimination and cultural biases (Demmert, 2005) In essence, the reclamation of Indigenous language can serve as a protective measure for Indigenous people.

The stories we tell ourselves matter. How we tell story determines where individuals interpret others within or how far outside the circle of belongingness they are. The farther we distance an individual or race from the circle of belongingness, the more we attribute their perceived failures to their own attributes or lack of attributes (Powell, 2013). The implications for this interpretation is a focus on fixing the individual or race instead of addressing the structures that perpetuate a story of lack of belongingness. What stories do we embrace? What stories do we exclude? Which stories do we allocate meaning? Which stories do we sideline as otherness? Powell calls for a focus on widening the circle of belongingness, which means humanizing the other. He calls for an approach of non-duality. Powell includes Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh's understanding, "I am; therefore you are. You are; therefore I am" (p. 22). Powell continues with a similar concept from the African culture, "*Ubuntu*, which emphasizes the relatedness of the human family" (p. 22). For the Dakota, *Mitakuye Owasin*, all my relatives conveys non-duality and provides a sense of belongingness for all. Furthermore, where individuality is emphasized; where other, us, and them is emphasized, teaching and learning systems can draw upon the Dakota philosophy, that we are all connected, *mitakuye owasin* (Deloria, 1998; Brendtro et al, 1990). Educators and our education systems should seek to be inclusive, non-confrontational, make accommodations, and utilize consensus making, and foster reconciliation and healing (Brendtro et al). Storytelling can have a significant impact in achieving these objectives.

The role that education can play is significant. Powell (2013) first calls for bringing the other back into the circle of human concern (i.e., belongingness). This radical approach, in part requires changing the narrative. This is why stories are important. Stories bring about relatedness. Stories humanize. Stories create belongingness.

Sense of Belonging's Universality and its Role in Education

Sense of belonging is important to everyone because it is part of basic human functioning. For example, sense of belonging is a component of well-being that leads to positive emotions, behaviors and thus outcomes (Strayhorn, 2012). Maslow (1970) describes his self-actualizing model of one that is inherent in human nature because the gratification of such fosters a healthy character and in contrast, the frustration of these needs and capacities will cause sickness or what he labels as pathologies. Thus, both Strayhorn and Maslow believe that sense of belonging and self-actualization are universal concepts that affect every individual.

Sense of belonging is not just a human need and motivation, its ability in influencing behavior is significant. In part, sense of belonging is supported through establishing bonds with others as human beings. Therefore, we try to preserve these relationships because the outcomes of such are positive.

Young people require sense of belonging as much as adults in order to fulfill the hierarchy of needs and move towards self-actualization. In fact, sense of belonging is a significant factor during a young person's development (Anderman, 2003; Goodenow, 1993b; Hamm & Faircloth, 2005). Brofenbrenner (1986) describes four worlds of childhood as: family, friends, work, and school. Youth spend a significant amount of time in schools during the most crucial period in their lives, the formative years. Therefore, the role that schools and education play for the development and nurturing of sense of belonging in young people is significant and can counteract the growing alienation young people feel today (Brofenbrenner). While family has a significant role in providing a sense of belongingness, so do schools. Brofenbrenner describes how students who feel rootless will have a difficult time paying attention in school. Strayhorn (2012) iterates the same but goes a step further in that, within educational settings, "the need to belong can

drive students' behaviors to or against academic achievement norms" (p. 19).

Furthermore, students who feel unsupported or rejected by adults or fellow peers may align themselves with groups that hold anti-academic norms, or a dis-identification with school, or a dis-investment in academic goals (Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Finn, 1989; Strayhorn). In conclusion, not only is sense of belonging a basic human need, it is fundamental to human behavior that influences educational achievement.

Sense of belonging heightened in certain populations. It is understood that sense of belonging is important for all students as they develop and mature and sense of belonging influences academic achievement and retention (Farrell, 1990; Finn, 1989; Strayhorn, 2012; Walton & Cohen, 2007; Wehlage et al, 1989). Yet, there exists numerous national reports on the academic achievement gaps across racial groups (Darling-Hammond, 2014). While there are numerous factors that contribute to academic success, the importance of sense of belonging is heightened for students of color and marginalized students in educational settings (Goodenow, 1993b; Strayhorn; Walton & Cohen). So significant, in 2009, President Barack Obama highlighted the importance of feeling of belonging in schools for racially diverse students. His statements drew attention to the complexity of academic achievement gaps prevalent in marginalized populations.

As a theoretical construct, Stayhorn (2012) identifies sense of belonging as an antecedent to student retention, especially for racially diverse students. Sense of belonging then, is critical in the retention of students of color, as we come to understand that the lack of sense of belonging can decrease motivations, impair development, and result in poor academic performance (Finn, 1989; Goodenow, 1993b; Strayhorn, 2012; Wehlage et al, 1989; Weiner, 1990). Simply put, academic goals cannot be achieved when there is a lack of sense of belonging. Moreover, in an effort to belong, sometimes students will enact negative choices out of desperation, of which society has witnessed in gang involvement, peer pressures for alcohol or drug use, or other risky behaviors. In severity, individuals with continual absence of belonging have led to self-hatred, detachment, and in some cases, suicide (Hatcher & Stubbersfield, 2013; Hill, 2009;

Strayhorn). Powell (2013) reiterates the dehumanization of people (e.g., their lack of belonging), has provided liberal proof of stress-related injury to one's health.

Teachers, curriculum, and classroom environments do in fact effect sense of belonging. In an effort to explain differences in student's sense of belonging, Ma (2003) reviewed educational survey data on sense of belonging, identifying discrepancies primarily within schools instead of between schools. She determined that self-esteem and health are the two most influential determinants of sense of belonging. In fact, it is self-esteem and health that trump most commonly held beliefs of sense of belonging related to social and economic status (SES) and number of parents (Ma). Furthermore, school context variables, including size and SES mean were not significant; however, school climate was an influential factor. This finding leads to the conclusion that schools and teachers are in a significant position for supporting student's sense of belonging by addressing school climate and self-esteem.

There has been a litany of educational research indicating the importance of sense of belonging for students in school. Numerous studies have indicated sense of belonging's importance in school environments, supportive for preventing high school drop-out, a commitment to education, and its connection to academic achievement (Anderman, 2003; Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Farrell, 1990; Goodenow, 1993b; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Kagan, 1990; Wehlage et al, 1989). Additionally, sense of belonging is directly affected by teacher practices, including interpersonal support practices, autonomy support practices, and those classroom practices that support positive peer relations (Osterman, 2010). Furthermore, research has identified a link between teacher classroom practices, such as values, cooperation, and supporting student thinking to increased sense of belonging (Solomon et al, 1997).

In conclusion, an absence of sense of belonging purports a sense of alienation or marginality that can undermine academic performance. Ma (2003) suggests more research be conducted on the development of sense of belonging in schools. Many educational researchers agree that the need for belonging is one of the most important needs of all to function well in learning environments (Osterman, 2000). In summary, interventions are needed to increase sense of belonging for marginalized students.

How storytelling in education can influence sense of belonging. Research has already indicated the impact storytelling pedagogy can have on literacy (Miller & Pennycuff, 2008). When students perceive academic work as interesting, important and useful, their sense of belonging increases (Anderman, 2003). Furthermore, research has suggested that classroom environments that promote respect and are psychologically safe, serve as protective measures against declining sense of belonging levels (Anderman). If it is understood that storytelling influences social identity, especially in early adolescence whereby students are beginning to form their life stories, then educators should be absolutely aware and concerned about which stories are told and integrated into curricula (Moita-Lopes, 2003). Sense of belonging is in part achieved by an individual's sense of social identity. In other words, how they perceive themselves in relation to a group contributes to sense of belonging (Strayhorn, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). The need for sense of belonging is increased in various contexts, including unfamiliar environments and environments where one would feel unaccepted or unsupported. Furthermore, an emphasis of including diverse story is paramount in widening the circle of belonging.

The inclusion and respect of diverse narrative intersects with our sense of belonging and determinative social identities. Making foreign environments familiar through inclusive narrative can lead to feeling validated, valued, visible, and an increased sense of belonging. In the end, we ask ourselves, which stories do we believe? What stories do you tell yourself? What stories could I change or exchange? How could schools create space for story and bring to light the invisible and possible?

Representations shape individual's perceptions, which, in turn, can influence behaviors (Strayhorn, 2012). In order to promote a sense of belonging among racially diverse students, one must correct or make visible positive images and representations of diverse populations. Perceptions then shape capacities to succeed in education.

Engagement as discussed by Strayhorn (2102) further catapults sense of belonging in that engagement further exemplifies connectedness and increases the sense of mattering. By engaging racially diverse narratives and stories, it not only supports a connectedness, (i.e., erases invisibility through engagement), it supports the idea that my story matters thus I matter.

It is said the health of a community can be defined by the stories told. Culture communicates traditional values and specifically there is a need for positive cultural narratives (Mohatt et al, 2011; Sleeter, 2011). Specifically, Mohatt et al concluded that an awareness of one's connectedness to family, community, and environment serves as a protective cultural factor against substance abuse, violence, depression and suicide. This idea of connectedness aligns with Dakota pedagogy, *Mitakuye Owasin*, and within Strayhorn's (2012) core elements of sense of belonging.

Within stories, there is an acceptance of other cultures and their stories; in essence an acceptance of multiple realities (Wilson, 2008). King (2003) shares some specific suggestions in order to nurture inclusiveness of story; respect stories as whole, respect and understand both symbol and metaphor, and view the storytelling world as cooperation, not opposition. Stories share diverse world views that support sense of belonging for all.

Stories are medicine. Sometimes story told a cure or remedy for sickness or injury (King, 2003). But most of all, I like the idea that stories can heal our spirit. When our heart is in the right place, then we have balance and peace. The vision of the heart is a democratic thing, as it is when all things are of value and related to one another. In Dakota culture, the leader's heart should be the same as the heart of the people. Equally so, a teacher's heart should be the same as the heart of their classroom.

Summary

In conclusion, academic settings must confront racism, suspend racial stereotypes, and serve as allies to racially and ethnically diverse students. Bronfenbrenner (1986) suggests that schools look to the community to support, "the noblest kind of education: the building of character in the young" (p. 436). Sense of belonging is a much needed character within our classrooms. Perhaps we should focus our educational energies on learning of the heart, a place where all stories begin.

It is apparent that sense of belonging is a significant consideration for classrooms, especially for marginalized students. In order to approach mitigating sense of belonging for Indigenous students, Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies must be considered. Furthermore, deliberate attention to traditional Indigenous methods of fostering sense of

belonging should be considered. Dakota people are Minnesota's first and Indigenous peoples of the land. The lack of Dakota perspectives and narratives within Minnesota classrooms is currently being challenged with the passage of a new law requiring American Indian contributions from Minnesota's tribes – the Dakota and Anishinaabe. Furthermore, both state and national recommendations from the American Indian community, identifies the following to be addressed: American Indian language and culture inclusion within classrooms; relationships between the school and American Indian parents and community; increases in American Indian student data; and educational planning and collaboration with the American Indian community.

Local Indigenous community members and allies are working together to heed the call for change. This research project was drawn from a Dakota community project led by Dakota Wicohan, a Native non-profit and supported by several allies, who developed curriculum that includes Dakota narrative and utilizes a traditional Dakota education method of storytelling. The curriculum was piloted within a Minnesota rural public school with an American Indian student population. Considering existing literature on the emphasis of sense of belonging and the absence of research that mitigates sense of belonging, questions included determining if such an intervention could influence students' sense of belonging. Furthermore, with the advent of newly required social studies standards requiring American Indian contributions, a secondary question included whether or not the curriculum aligned with the new standards.

CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY

Dakota Wicohan, a regional Native non-profit organization and several regional partners created a state-wide culturally-based curriculum that strives to increase the visibility of Dakota youth within school by using an Indigenous learning strategy (i.e., storytelling) incorporating Dakota contributions in social studies curricula. Additionally, the aim of the culturally-based curriculum was to support fulfilling the recently adopted social studies standards in Minnesota which requires the inclusion of American Indian contributions. The culturally-based curriculum was piloted by sixth and tenth grade social studies teachers in a rural public school. In this study, the culturally-based curriculum served as a cultural intervention to determine its influence on American Indian student's sense of belonging and to determine the curriculum's effectiveness in meeting the social studies standards.

This project was a part of a larger study in collaboration with Dakota Wicohan and the University of Minnesota Morris and funded in part by a sub award grant through the Collaborative Research Center for American Indians under the National Institute of Health. Other funders of the project included The Minnesota Historical and Cultural Grants Program, made possible by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the vote of Minnesotans on November 4, 2008 and the Indian Land Tenure Foundation. The use of 'we' most often indicates myself and the co-researcher, indicative of this collaborative participatory action research project.

Statement of the Problem

Sense of belonging has already been determined to be integral to self-actualization and well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hagerty & Patusky, 1995; Hagerty, Williams, Coyne, & Early, 1996; Maslow, 1970). Previous correlative research indicates the significant role sense of belonging on education, school success, and the development of youth (Anderman, 2003; Goodenow, 1993b; Ma, 2003; Osterman, 2010; Osterman, 2000; Sánchez, Colón, & Esparza, 2005; Uwah, McMahon, & Furlow, 2008). Furthermore, the role that sense of belonging has on marginalized students is more significant than it has on non-marginalized students (Faircloth & Hamm, 2005; Farrell, 1990; Maestas et al, 2007; Strayhorn, 2012; Walton & Cohen, 2007). This understanding

is important considering the educational data and disparities of American Indian students. American Indian communities and concerned leaders have been calling for change in school structures and systems through specific recommendations, including the need for culturally-based curricula and meaningful American Indian community-school partnerships. However, there exists a gap in research connecting cultural interventions and their influence on sense of belonging on American Indian students.

Research Questions

1. Did the cultural intervention (i.e., culturally-based curriculum) influence sense of belonging?
 - a. Did the cultural intervention influence American Indian students' Psychological Sense of School Membership?
 - b. Did the cultural intervention influence American Indian students' sense of belonging in the General Mainstream Community?
 - c. Did the cultural intervention influence American Indian students' sense of belonging in the Dakota Community?
2. Did the culturally-based curriculum meet Minnesota's new social studies standards?
 - a. According to the perceptions of social studies teachers, did the Dakota teaching and learning method of storytelling support the transfer of Minnesota's new social studies standards?
 - b. According to the perceptions of social studies teachers, did the inclusion of Dakota narrative align with Minnesota's new social studies standards?

Research Methodology

A mixed methodology design was used for this project. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data provided a better understanding to this exploratory research problem, provided a broader and more inclusive analysis for this pilot project, aided in making suggestions for further research, and improving the cultural intervention (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003). Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) asserts that a pragmatic researcher productively uses both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to better inform the other. By combining the two, both the

quantitative research agenda, which is often motivated by a concern, and the qualitative research agenda, inspired to include participant voice, are met and supported (Onwuegbuzie & Leech).

The quantitative approach was helpful in investigating the influence of the cultural intervention upon sense of belonging. Qualitative data complements this study by providing insights into this phenomena. The use of phenomenology focuses upon the lived experiences of those affected by a phenomena (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007; Grbich, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). Results provided an understanding of experiences of American Indian students who have participated in the cultural intervention from a rural/tribal community public school. Understanding the essence of American Indian students' perceptions of their sense of belonging, Dakota visibility, voice, and representation in school, in comparison to Euro-American students was sought. A qualitative method through the use of a survey was also used to gain the perceptions of teachers who implemented the cultural intervention to determine whether or not the curriculum was in alignment with the new social studies standards. This study garnered both intended results, (i.e., sense of belonging measures) and unintended results (qualitative data) because this is a new cultural intervention that has never been tested on any population. Providing room for qualitative inquiry is paramount to furthering future studies and improving the cultural intervention (i.e., culturally-based curriculum) for future use.

The primary purpose of this research project was to explore and assess the effect of the cultural intervention (i.e., a culturally-based curriculum) on sense of belonging of American Indian students. This study was done through both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (culturally-based focus groups) methods. A secondary purpose of the study was to obtain feedback from teachers regarding the curriculum through quantitative methods (questionnaires). Teachers' perceptions on whether or not the culturally-based curriculum met social studies academic standards was gathered through a questionnaire. These two purposes supported the evaluation of the effectiveness of the culturally-based curriculum and determining its influence on sense of belonging.

This study involved broad community partnership from trans-disciplinary fields. Planning, designing, and implementing the overall curriculum project was primarily led by Dakota Wicohan. Partnerships with the University of Minnesota Morris, Minnesota Historical Society, Perpich Center for Arts Education, Indian Land Tenure Foundation, the school partner, and financial supporters made this project feasible. This project is part of a broader study that included an evaluative research partner, Dr. Heather J. Peters of the University of Minnesota Morris. This broader study also involved the Dakota community as co-researchers that goes beyond PAR and aligns with an Indigenous framework (Peters & Peterson, 2015c).

Analytical Framework

CRT provides the impetus for this study. The study aligns with the three goals that CRT supports; present counter narratives from the perspective of minorities, end suppression and recognizing race as a social construct, and address gender, class, and areas of difference within racialized others (Creswell, 2013). Critical theoretical frameworks, inclusive of counter narratives assist in critically challenging the status quo in education. CRT's underpinning is that racism is prevalent to society, thus this study looked at the differences between American Indian and Euro-American students sense of belonging. Furthermore, TribalCrit furthers the goals of critical theoretical frameworks by specifying the complicated colonialism affects for American Indians in the United States (Brayboy, 2006) of which was addressed in this study through the implementation of the cultural intervention (i.e., the culturally-based curriculum).

This study was in alignment with Indigenous theoretical frameworks on a number of levels. One, a qualitative inquiry methodology such as culturally-based focus groups, (i.e., talking circles) respect Indigenous methods of inquiry. Secondly, the use of talking circles supports the inclusion of multiple realities. Thirdly, a commitment to the relationships gained through this project requires an accountability to maintain those relationships. Furthermore, the use of a community-based PAR model draws from an Indigenous paradigm and methodologies from a praxis perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Harding et al, 2011; Peters & Peterson, 2015c; Wilson, 2008). This project offered opportunities for marginalized populations (i.e., students and American Indians) to

become empowered in and through research that values their perspectives and moves them from the margins onto equal footing with those from the mainstream community (Denzin & Lincoln; Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Lavallee, 2009). Through this project, the Dakota community identified and created strategies for positive change that were developed by them and intended for their youth (i.e., culturally based curriculum). Specifically, this project pursued lines of inquiry that are meaningful to the community (i.e., sense of belonging) and utilizes culturally sensitive strategies (e.g., talking circles, waived consent) that are relevant to the Dakota community. Additionally, co-researchers from the Dakota community assisted in data collection and analyses. Results were also disseminated back to the community. This step is imperative because those being researched should have direct access to the study and results (Bergstrom, Cleary, & Peacock, 2003; Freire, 1970; Lavallee; Miheuah, 1998). Additionally, this participatory action research project supports social justice agency in that the Dakota co-researchers are becoming the change agents within the education system (Denzin & Lincoln; Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen; Gall, Gall, & Borg; Harding et al; Lavallee).

Through qualitative analyses, phenomenology served as primary method, in that the questions asked followed an inquiry on the essence that participants experienced about a phenomenon (i.e., students' experiences and sense of belonging in school related to a cultural intervention) (Creswell et al, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Grbich, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). The importance of incorporating the student's perceptions through qualitative inquiry follows the foundational tenet of a 'return to things themselves' that Edmund Husserl is credited to in phenomenological philosophy (Langdridge, 2007). The use of phenomenology utilize 'thick descriptions of participants experiences' that go beyond researcher's theories and provide deeper meanings by including contexts in which those experiences are related by participants (Morrow, 2005). Therefore, in this exploratory research project, the combined results will help inform the other (i.e., development), support validation of results (i.e., triangulation), further clarify the results of each other (complementarity), expand the breadth and range of inquiry (i.e.,

expansion), and discover paradoxes and contradictions for future inquiry (i.e., initiation) (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005)

Participants

Upon approval to proceed with the study from the Board of Directors from Dakota and the school partner, approval was secured from the Institutional Review Board from the University of Minnesota. Participants included sixth and tenth grade social studies students from the school partner located within a rural/tribal community area in Minnesota. The school had approximately a 26% American Indian student population and 66% white student population (MDE, 2014). This research project was part of a larger study, whereby all 162 social studies students, 87 in sixth grade and 55 in tenth grade were invited to be a part of the study. All sixth and tenth grade social studies students received the cultural intervention. Thus criterion sampling was used because the data best represents those experiencing the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013).

There were three social studies teachers who were responsible for implementing the curriculum in four classes. All three teachers completed pre and post questionnaires.

Research Design

Variables

The independent variable in this project was the culturally-based curriculum. The dependent variables were sense of belonging (i.e., Psychological Sense of School Membership and Sense of Belonging Instrument-Dakota and Mainstream) and teacher perceptions of alignment with social studies standards. Additionally, talking circles were used to gather students' perceptions related to their sense of belonging and the inclusion of Dakota contributions represented in school and curriculum.

Quantitative

Dakota and non-Native youth were asked to fill out the following questionnaires prior to and after implementation of the culturally-based curriculum: Psychological Sense of School Membership, Sense of Belonging Instrument for Dakota and Mainstream communities, and a demographic questionnaire.

Psychological Sense of School Membership. The Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) was developed by Carol Goodenow in 1993. It is an 18 item scale

intended to measure belongingness within school out of a growing understanding of the importance of sense of belonging in educational settings. The PSSM scale is often used to measure perceived school connectedness, of which Resnick et al (1997) identified as a resiliency factor. In particular, PSSM results suggest that sense of school membership influences motivation, effort, participation, and achievement in school (Goodenow, 1993a).

Scales and subscales. All 18 items of the PSSM (see Appendix A) were written in a 5-point Likert format, with choices ranging from *not at all true* (1) to *completely true* (5). Items 3, 6, 9, 12, and 16 require reverse scoring. The possible range of total score is 18 to 90. While most studies indicate the use of PSSM unidimensionally, You, Ritchey, Furlong, Shochet, and Boman (2010) indicated that doing so may overlook important information. You et al analyzed several studies utilizing the PSSM and conducted confirmatory factor analyses that measured three related latent constructs, and found that the three-factor model was good and discriminant validity was high. It confirmed that the PSSM is a multidimensional scale and the following subscales are pertinent; perceptions of caring adult relationships, acceptance or belongingness at school, and rejection or disrespect. The use of the PSSM as a multidimensional scale is important, since research indicates social behavioral distinctions between those accepted, rejected, and neglected (Carlson, Lahey, & Neeper, 1984).

Reliability and validity. The PSSM overall scale was initially tested through three separate studies within suburban and urban schools with internal consistent reliability, using the Cronbach's alpha scoring, .875, .884, and .817 (Goodenow, 1993a). The PSSM subscales were tested through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses in a later study with high school students. The Cronbach's alpha scoring provided the following results: perceptions of caring adult relationships .73, acceptance or belongingness at school .72, and rejection or disrespect .70, indicating internal consistent reliability and that the scale can be used multi-dimensionally (You et al, 2010). In this study, the pre Cronbach's alphas were the following: overall PSSM .878, perceptions of caring adult relationships .527, acceptance or belongingness at school .746, and rejection or disrespect .653. In this study, the post Cronbach's alphas were the following: overall PSSM .911,

perceptions of caring adult relationships .656, acceptance or belongingness at school .786, and rejection or disrespect .814. Internal consistency reliability ranged from .77 to .88. The PSSM score for suburban school was 3.86 with a standard deviation of .72 and again in the fall, a score of 3.84 and SD = .72. For students from two urban schools, scores of 3.11, SD = .70 and 3.09, SD = .61 were obtained. The PSSM's construct validity was established by making predictions about contrasted groups. For example, as predicted, students from suburban schools reported higher PSSM scores than urban groups. Suburban students new to the area were predicted and scored lower scores than those who have resided in the area longer. Grade levels did not have significant differences in scores. Social categories were hypothesized to have difference in scores, including gender, ethnicity, and special education. A three-way ANOVA was conducted and girls were found to have significant higher scores. There were no significant differences for minorities or special education status. Additionally, a hypothesis whereby English teachers' ratings of social standing with peers would have significant differences was confirmed.

For urban students, several of the same group differences within the suburban group did not appear. Urban students new to the area did not yield differences. Gender by ethnicity did exhibit a trend toward significance, again whereby girls had higher PSSM scores. PSSM scores by ethnicity did not provide differences, except when looking at within school differences. For example, those students with status as a member from the majority ethnic group did have significantly higher scores.

Additional correlative data analysis indicates that PSSM scores, due to motivation influence school behavior and academic achievement. Various demographics have been assessed through the PSSM, thus the most common demographic questions, (e.g., gender and race) were included in the questionnaire.

Procedure. This project was part of a larger study and thus, the school partner felt it necessary to separate portions of data collection according to classroom time constraints. Parents were mailed and emailed information about the purpose of the study, information on data that would be collected, and the voluntary nature of participation. The PSSM survey was collected in class.

Data Collection. Researchers following a script, informed the students about the survey, provided directions to filling out the questionnaires, and answered questions students had. Students were reminded that participation was voluntary. Students were asked to provide their school lunch number as an identifier so that pre and post scores could be matched. Survey completion times ranged from ten to twenty minutes.

Sense of Belonging Instrument. The SOBI (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995), includes both a psychological (valued involvement and fit) score and an antecedent (desire and ability) score, in order to rate an individual's sense of belonging. The SOBI is a widely used instrument and allows for the adaption of different cultural contexts. This project examined both the general mainstream (Euro-American) community and the Dakota community.

Scales and subscales. The SOBI Psychological (SOBI-P) subscale score (see Appendix B) is derived from an 18-item scale, using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The SOBI-P is written in the negative, thus a higher score would represent a higher sense of belonging. The SOBI Antecedent (SOBI-A) subscale score comprises a 15-item using a 4-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 4 (strongly disagree). The SOBI-A is written in the positive, therefore a higher score would represent a low antecedent. The SOBI-A scale has three items (11, 14, and 15) that should be reverse scored. The possible range of total score is 18 to 72 for the SOBI-P and 15-60 for the SOBI-A.

Reliability and validity. The early Hagerty and Patusky (1995) study focused on developing valid and reliable measures for the SOBI. The inter-scale correlation measure between SOBI-P and SOBI-A was .45. Construct validity was measured by contrasting group mean scores between sample groups. Initial studies provided an internal consistent reliability report for each community; college group, depressed group, and nuns at .93, .93, and .91 for the SOBI-P and .72, .63, and .76 for the SOBI-A, respectively. Reliability was established through test-retest reliability through a student group. The results were .84 for the SOBI-P and .66 for the SOBI-A over eight weeks. Factor analysis was conducted with student data only and produced an interfactor correlation of .36. Researchers have demonstrated good construct validity and reliability of SOBI with

various populations across different cultural groups (Jones, 2003; Lee, 2010; McLaren Gomez, Bailey, & Van Der Horst, 2007; Sangon, 2004; Smith, 2011). Previous research suggests that you can adapt this measure to different cultural contexts by filling in the blank of the following directions: *Please indicate your best answer by putting an X through the appropriate response. Only select one answer per question. Please answer all questions as related to the _____ Community.* Peters and Peterson (2015b) examined the SOBI, for both the Dakota and Mainstream cultures, in 75 Dakota participants. Alphas were as follows: SOBI-P Dakota .95; SOBI-A Dakota .73; SOBI-P Mainstream .96; and SOBI-A Mainstream .78. Therefore for this study, SOBI was assessed through general mainstream and Dakota cultures. For this study, the alphas were as follows: pre SOBI-P Dakota .943, SOBI-A Dakota .819, pre SOBI-P General Mainstream .923, SOBI-A General Mainstream .792, post SOBI-P Dakota .954, SOBI-A Dakota .841, post SOBI-P General Mainstream .956, SOBI-A General Mainstream .762.

Various demographics have been assessed through the SOBI, thus the most common demographic questions (e.g., gender and race) were included in the questionnaire.

Procedure. This community-based PAR project is part of a larger study. The school partner decided that collecting the PSSM during class time was acceptable, however decided that the SOBI surveys should be collected outside of class time to reduce the time spent in class completing surveys. Thus, researchers collected the SOBI before and after school, along with additional instruments that supported the larger part of the study. Because PSSM was viewed as being part of the evaluation of the cultural intervention, the IRB did not require student or parent consent or assent. Parent consent and student assent was utilized for collecting the SOBI. Parents were mailed and emailed information about the purpose of the study, information on data that would be collected, and the voluntary nature of participation. Community researchers assisted with recruiting students and collecting parent consent forms.

Data Collection. The school board room served as the primary data collection site for the SOBI, whereby students could participate in five different occasions before or after school. Researchers following a script, informed the students about the nature of the

survey, provided directions to filling out the questionnaires, including distinction between Dakota and general mainstream communities, and answered questions students had. Students were reminded that participation was voluntary. Students were asked to provide their school lunch number as an identifier so that pre and post scores could be matched. Survey completion ranged from ten to twenty minutes. Dakota students were offered an additional opportunity to take the surveys after school at an after-school site that provides cultural programming.

Qualitative

Talking Circles. Dakota and non-Native youth were asked to participate in talking circles (i.e., culturally-based focus groups) prior to and after implementation of the culturally-based curriculum. Talking circles and/or focus groups are helpful in stimulating discussion for participants in a non-threatening manner to share their perceptions, experiences, and feelings about the topic. The group discussion fosters interaction, thus causing those who might not otherwise share, feel more inclined to (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Focus groups have been used in qualitative research to address collective struggles and serve as a catalyst for social transformation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Focus groups generate safe spaces to talk about participant lives and shared struggles, centered upon the topic of research (Denzin & Lincoln; Krueger & Casey, 2002). Questions were developed by researchers based on previous research on sense of belonging, connectedness, and visibility of Dakota people. The questions were placed into five categories: Opening, Introduction, Transition, Key, and Ending (Krueger & Casey, 2002). Questions (see Appendix C & D) related to their sense of belonging and the inclusion of Dakota contributions represented in school and curriculum were asked. General questions about students' school experiences were asked. A transition question was asked to describe a situation in which they felt a sense of belonging in school. Key questions addressed how the Dakota way of life was valued in school; in what ways are Dakota people represented in the curriculum; and what their sense of belonging is in the classroom.

Reliability and validity. In qualitative research, it is impossible to address reliability because one cannot eliminate the variance between the researcher's values and

research expectations (Maxwell, 1996). In order to address validity, researchers identified general measures that control for validity threats both prior to and during data analysis. Four variables defined by Morrow (2005) affecting the trustworthiness of this study were addressed; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to internal consistency and rigor applied and in this study was addressed by the use of community researchers (more than one researcher), seeking negative case analysis, co-analyses, researcher reflexivity, and use of source data descriptions (Morrow). By focusing on what is experienced and the way the phenomena is experienced as related verbatim by participants ensures phenomenological intentionality (Langdridge, 2007). Transferability denotes generalizability and within this study, information about the lead researcher is included in chapter one. Additionally, information about the context, processes, participants, and the relationships between researcher and participants are included in order for the audience to determine on their own any generalizability of this study (Morrow). This study's dependability (i.e., consistency) is addressed through the use of an audit trail during analyses and was continually examined by the co-researcher, who served as auditor to the qualitative analyses (Morrow). Finally, this study's findings are based on those researched or otherwise known as confirmability because the findings remain based upon learning from participants' experiences by immersing researchers in the data; seeking disconfirmation of thematic findings; managing reflexivity through bracketing throughout analyses, by researchers maintaining a detailed journal of feelings and thoughts; and debriefing and finding consensus within the research analyses team (Morrow).

Bracketing, sometimes referred to as *epoche* is an attempt to abstain from our own preconceived ideas (Langdridge, 2007). While remaining objective is impossible and the idea that one could actually maintain objectivity is in direct contradiction to Indigenous theory, researchers sought to approach it through descriptive steps in a phenomenological psychology approach. Descriptive steps included: read and immersed oneself in the data as if in discovery mode; maintained a detailed journal throughout analyses; refrained from automatically reducing data to one's perceived themes; considered imaginative variations of explanations; and utilized verification by using exact

text in displaying characteristic responses (Langdrige). In determining consensual thematic categories, key terms, and characteristic responses, researchers applied a phenomenological reduction process through repeated reflections to uncover layers, refrained from the use of hierarchy of details, and utilized verification by taking analysis back to transcriptions (Langdrige).

Procedure. Talking circles required signed student consent to participate. Participants were recruited through a number of ways. First, parents and guardians were informed of their student's option to participate in a talking circle through a mailing and email correspondence. Secondly, during in class PSSM data collection, researchers discussed how they could participate in a talking circle and provided a reminder slip that included a schedule to participate. Third, students received an additional written reminder throughout that week. At the school, all students were offered five different opportunities to participate in talking circles both before and after school. Dakota students were offered an alternative location to participate through an after-school site that offers cultural programming, in order to ensure participation from Dakota students.

Students were offered \$10 to participate in each pre and post talking circles. Talking circles were separated by Dakota and non-Native participants in order to meet the goals of gaining Dakota student perspectives and by comparing their perspectives to Euro-American student perspectives.

Data Collection. Dakota talking circles were led by lead Dakota researcher and Euro-American talking circles were led by the co-researcher, a Euro-American, in order to support comfort and trustworthiness between researchers and participants. Participants were offered refreshments prior to and after conducting the talking circles. Participants sat in a circle with two audio recorders in the center. The researcher read a script that included information about the study, including voluntary participation, and answered any questions participants had. Then students were offered to sign the informed consent forms and proceeded with the focus group questions. Talking circles lasted between 20 and 40 minutes.

Teacher Surveys. While Minnesota requires schools to adopt the new social studies requirements, which includes Dakota contributions, it is currently an untested

mandate. In other words, it has not yet been determined how new standards requiring American Indian contributions are being met.

The teacher survey (see Appendix E) was developed by the researcher to assess whether or not the culturally-based curriculum aligned with the social studies standards as determined by teacher perceptions. A draft of the teacher survey was sent to fellow colleagues for review and feedback. The suggestions provided clarity, cohesiveness, and streamlined concepts for the final survey. The teacher survey was important because the inclusion of a culturally-based curriculum needs to fulfill academic requirements of schools in order for it to be widely accepted and integrated within classrooms across Minnesota.

Questions related to the teachers' perceptions included the degree of external support to implement the curriculum, degree of confidence and training to meet new standards, their feelings on the use of storytelling methods, their feelings on expanding the diversity of stories, and student's sense of belonging.

The teacher survey was an 11-item questionnaire with a five point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not at all), 3 (some what), and 5 (a lot), and 6 (not applicable); thus, a higher score represented a greater agreement with the statement. Demographic information is included as well.

Procedure. Waiver for consent and assent was granted by IRB for teacher participation. Teachers were first told of the survey at a collaborative community team planning meeting that discussed and determined the course and steps of the overall research project. Teachers were told that their participation was voluntary and that their feedback would be instrumental in evaluating and in the editing of the curriculum after the study was completed.

Data Collection. Pre survey data collection occurred at the beginning of the teacher training for implementing the curriculum and held at the local community center that is adjacent to the school. All three teachers were asked to voluntarily participate in the survey collection both before and after implementing the curriculum. A script was used to discuss the desire to include their perceptions about the effectiveness of the

curriculum. Researchers answered questions teachers had about the study. Post surveys were collected in person during the week post student data was collected in classrooms.

Data Analysis

Quantitative. One research assistant entered data directly into a statistical software program called, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). A second research assistant cleaned the data. A Repeated Measures ANOVA was used to assess the PSSM. A repeated measures model is appropriate in order to account for the within participant design and test for change over time. The repeated measures ANOVA examined grade and cultural differences. A significant level of $p = 0.05$ was used.

A Repeated Measures ANOVA was used to assess the SOBI. A repeated measures model is appropriate in order to account for the within participant design and test for change over time. The repeated measures ANOVA examined grade and cultural differences. A significant level of $p = 0.05$ was used.

Qualitative. First, pre and post talking circles were transcribed verbatim followed by a thorough review of the documents by research assistants, alternately checking the transcriptions and researchers finalizing transcriptions. Researchers and research assistants conducted inductive data analysis using a qualitative analysis software, NVivo, an appropriate software package to evaluate, interpret, and explain social phenomena.

The qualitative research team consisted of lead researcher, co-researcher, and two research assistants. In order to support triangulation, including team members from both cultures (i.e., Dakota and Euro-American) was strategically made. The team met on several occasions to discuss and decide the analyses process through a phenomenological lens provided by literature and training. The team decided that the co-researcher would serve as auditor for the group because of her extensive experience in qualitative research and specifically with phenomenology. The team participated in NVivo training via video tutorial links. The team decided that their analyses would apply the structured method of analysis developed by Moustakas (1994). First each member of the team bracketed by detailed journaling, using a question guide suggested by Langdridge (2007), including a description of their own experiences with the phenomenon. Secondly, the team individually analyzed four pre talking circle transcripts, by identifying significant

statements and placing them into nodes in NVivo. Next, they individually developed themes or meaning units through the use of parent nodes and child nodes in NVivo. Then the team met over a series of 5 days to discuss and come to consensus on units of meaning, key elements, descriptors of meaning using data directly from transcriptions, and identification of discrepant, and uncodable data. The auditor ensured that validity threats were uncovered to increase credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This process was repeated for three post talking circle transcripts over a series of 4 days to discuss and come to consensus.

Summary

A mixed methodological study was used to support previous research that sense of belonging is important in educational settings in determining the effectiveness of a cultural intervention (i.e., culturally-based curriculum) and to provide new insights into what and how sense of belonging is supported in classrooms and in school, according to student perceptions. By utilizing statistical data and qualitative inquiry, the influence of a cultural intervention on sense of belonging was better understood. Furthermore, teacher perceptions on whether or not the cultural intervention was effective in meeting academic standards supports the improvement and future dissemination of an Indigenous-developed curriculum that can help achieve state mandates.

The findings of this study include significant results of the PSSM and subscales, SOBI, teachers' perceptions of the curriculum, and thematic findings based upon the perceptions of American Indian and Euro-American students' experiences in school, as they relate to sense of belonging and the visibility of the Dakota way of life.

CHAPTER FOUR – FINDINGS

Background

The primary purpose of the research project was to assess whether the cultural intervention (i.e., curriculum) influenced sense of belonging of American Indian students by comparing them with Euro-American students' sense of belonging. A secondary purpose of the study was to evaluate the curriculum's alignment with meeting Minnesota's new social studies standards requiring American Indian contributions, according to the perspectives of teachers implementing the curriculum.

The study was conducted through a mixed research methodology collecting quantitative and qualitative data through questionnaires, surveys, and talking circles. In this chapter, the results of the data, include the PSSM and subscales, SOBI-P, SOBI-A, student perceptions, teacher perceptions, and significant findings are presented.

Quantitative

Participants

PSSM. A total of 107 students completed both the pre and post PSSM surveys, with 64 sixth grade and 43 tenth grade students. The average age of sixth grade students was 11.17 years of age, standard deviation was .423, with 32 females and 31 males, and one missing data, with 17 identified as American Indian (AI) students, 44 as Euro-American (EA) students, one identified as Mexican American, and two had missing data. For tenth grade students, the average age was 15.21, standard deviation was .412, with 18 females and 25 males, with 15 identified as AI students, and 28 as EA.

SOBI. For those students that completed both pre and post SOBI, 14 identified as AI and three as EA.

Results

PSSM. A within subjects repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on PSSM scores (dependent variable) for sixth AI ($n = 9$), EA ($n = 32$) and tenth grade AI ($n = 13$), EA ($n = 23$) students to determine any differences. There was no significant change in overall PSSM scores for sixth grade students, $F(1, 39) = .652, p = .424$. However, the interaction between culture and pre and post PSSM scores was significant (see Figure 1), $F(1, 39) = 6.63, p = .014, \text{Partial } \eta^2 = .145$. See Table 1 for means and standard

deviations. The Levene's test of equality variances was not significant, $F's \leq .095$ and $p's \geq .760$. This result indicated that sixth grade EA students' post PSSM scores improved from pre PSSM scores, whereas AI students' post PSSM scores went down from pre PSSM scores.

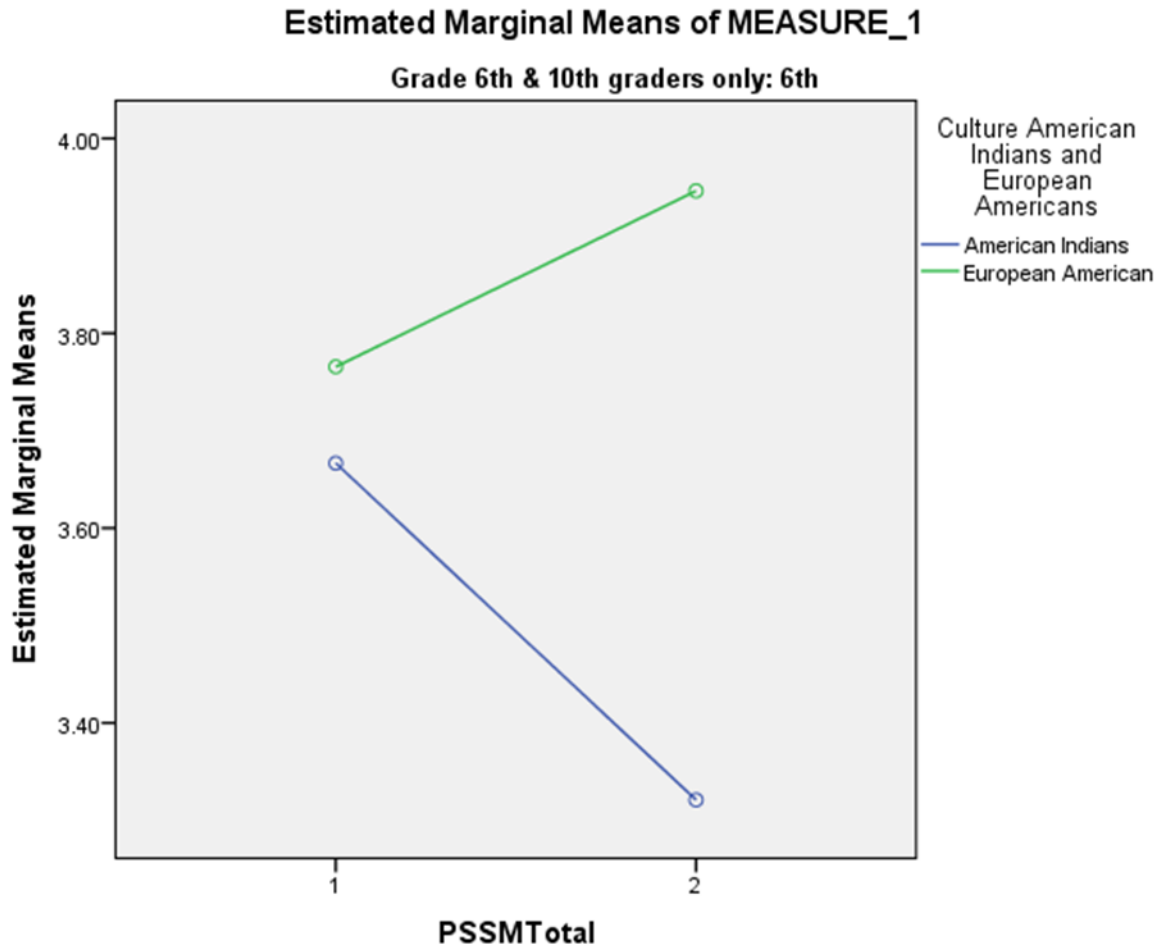


Figure 1. 6th Grade PSSM Total Scores-Interaction between Culture. As EA 6th grade students' feelings of belonging increased from pre to post, AI 6th grade students' feelings of belonging decreased.

For tenth grade students, there was no significant change between pre and post PSSM scores, $F(1, 34) = .063$, $p = .803$. There was no significant interaction between culture (i.e., AI and EA) and PSSM scores, $F(1, 34) = 1.04$, $p = .316$. The Levene's test of equality variances was not significant, $F's \leq .811$ and $p's \geq .374$.

PSSM caring relationship subscale. For AI (n= 14) and EA (n=39) sixth grade students, there were no significant differences in the pre and post caring relationship subscale scores, $F(1, 51) = .860, p = .36$. Additionally, for sixth grade students, the interaction between culture and PSSM caring relationship subscale scores approached significance, $F(1, 51) = 3.00, p = .089$ (see Figure 2) The Levene's test of equality variances was not significant, $F's \leq 2.75$ and $p's \geq .10$.

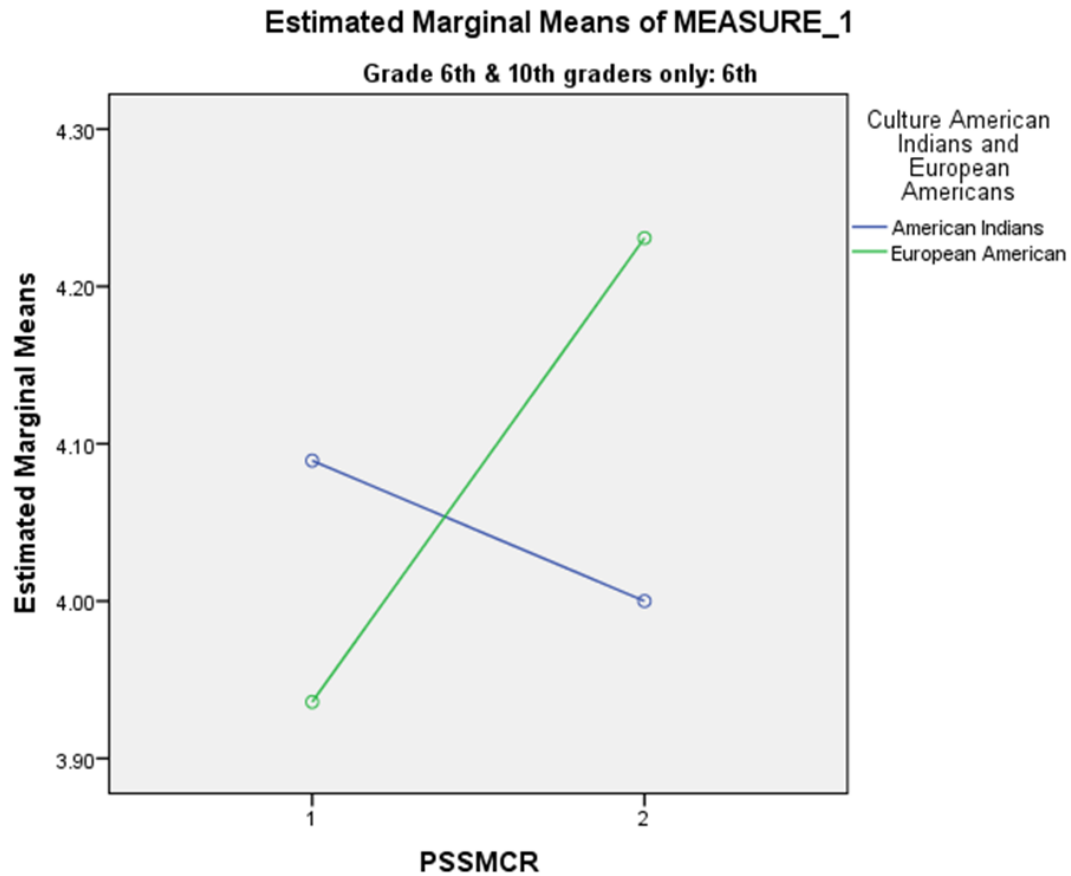


Figure 2. 6th Grade PSSM Caring Relationships Subscale Scores-Interaction between Culture. As EA 6th grade students' feelings of caring relationships increased from pre to post, AI students' feelings of caring relationships decreased.

For tenth AI (n = 13) and EA (n = 26) grade students, there was no significant difference in the pre and post scores, $F(1, 37) = .758, p = .39$. However, there was significant interaction (see Figure 3) between culture and PSSM caring relationship subscale scores, $F(1, 37) = 8.00, p = .008, Partial \eta^2 = .178$. See Table 1 for means and

standard deviations. The Levene's test of equality variances was not significant, F 's ≤ 1.74 and p 's $\geq .195$. In other words, AI tenth grade students' caring scores increased, while EA tenth grade students' caring relationship subscale scores decreased. Table 1 provides the means and standard deviations of PSSM caring relationship subscale scores by ethnicity for tenth grade students.

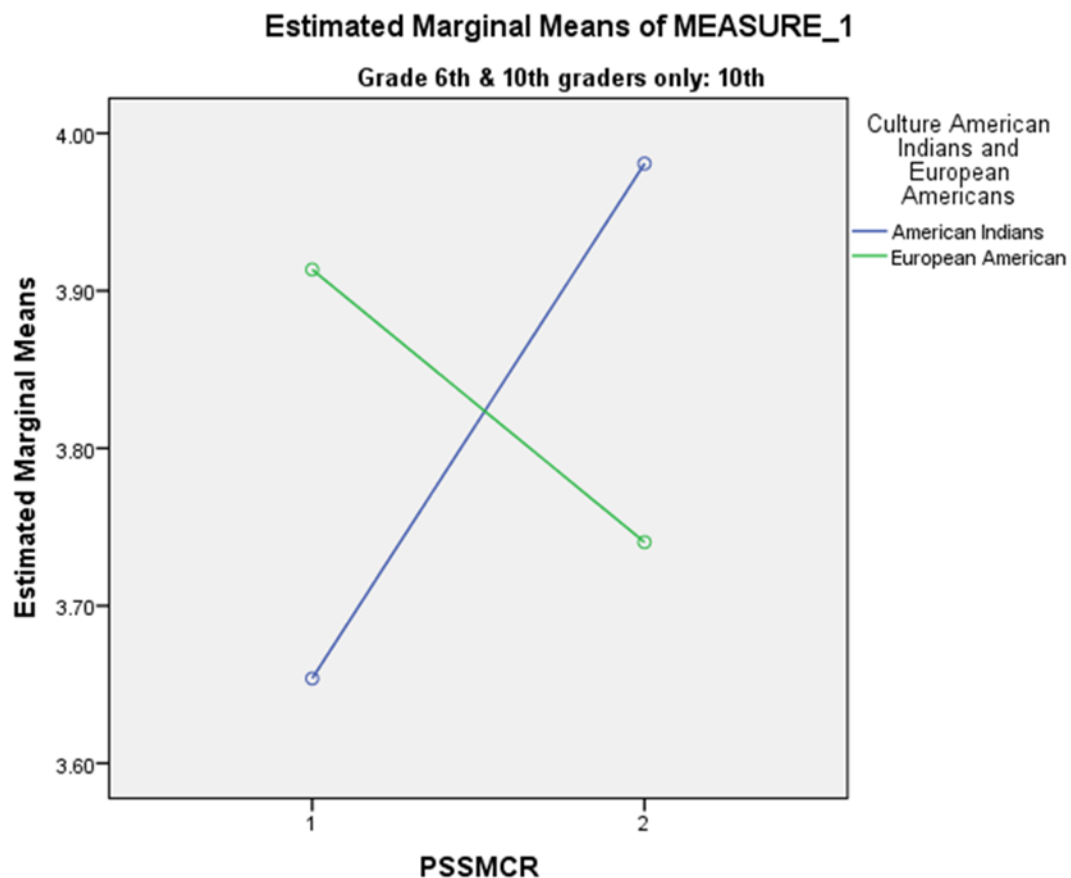


Figure 3. 10th Grade PSSM Caring Relationships Subscale Scores-Interaction between Culture. As EA 10th grade students' feelings of caring relationships decreased from pre to post, AI students' feelings of caring relationships increased.

PSSM acceptance subscale. For sixth grade AI ($n = 15$) and EA ($n = 41$) students, there was no significant change in PSSM pre and post acceptance subscale scores, $F(1, 54) = .694, p = .408$. Additionally, for sixth grade students, there was no significant interaction between culture and PSSM acceptance subscale scores, $F(1, 54) =$

.881, $p = .352$. The Levene's test of equality variances was not significant, $F's \leq 2.95$ and $p's \geq .092$.

For tenth grade AI ($n = 14$) and EA ($n = 25$) students, there was no significant change in PSSM pre and post scores, $F(1, 37) = .104, p = .749$. Additionally for tenth grade students, there was no significant interaction between culture and PSSM acceptance subscale scores, $F(1, 37) = 1.34, p = .254$. The Levene's test of equality variances was not significant, $F's \leq 1.64$ and $p's \geq .21$.

PSSM rejection subscale. For sixth AI ($n = 14$) and EA ($n = 38$) grade students, the change in pre and post rejection subscale scores was not significant, $F(1, 50) = 3.21, p = .079$. However, the interaction between culture and rejection scores for sixth grade students was significant, $F(1, 50) = 6.40, p = .015, Partial \eta^2 = .113$ (see Figure 4). The Levene's test of equality variances was no significant, $F's \leq 1.67$ and $p's \geq .20$. See Table 1 for means and standard deviations. AI PSSM rejection subscale scores decreased indicating that AI students' feelings of rejection increased, whereas EA PSSM rejection subscale scores increased indicating that EA students' feelings of rejection decreased.

For tenth grade AI ($n = 14$) and EA ($n = 27$) students, there was no significant difference in pre and post scores, $F(1, 39) = .685, p = .41$. Additionally for tenth grade students, there was no significant interaction between culture and PSSM rejection subscale scores, $F(1, 39) = .07, p = .80$. The Levene's test of equality variances was not significant, $F's \leq .047$ and $p's \geq .830$.

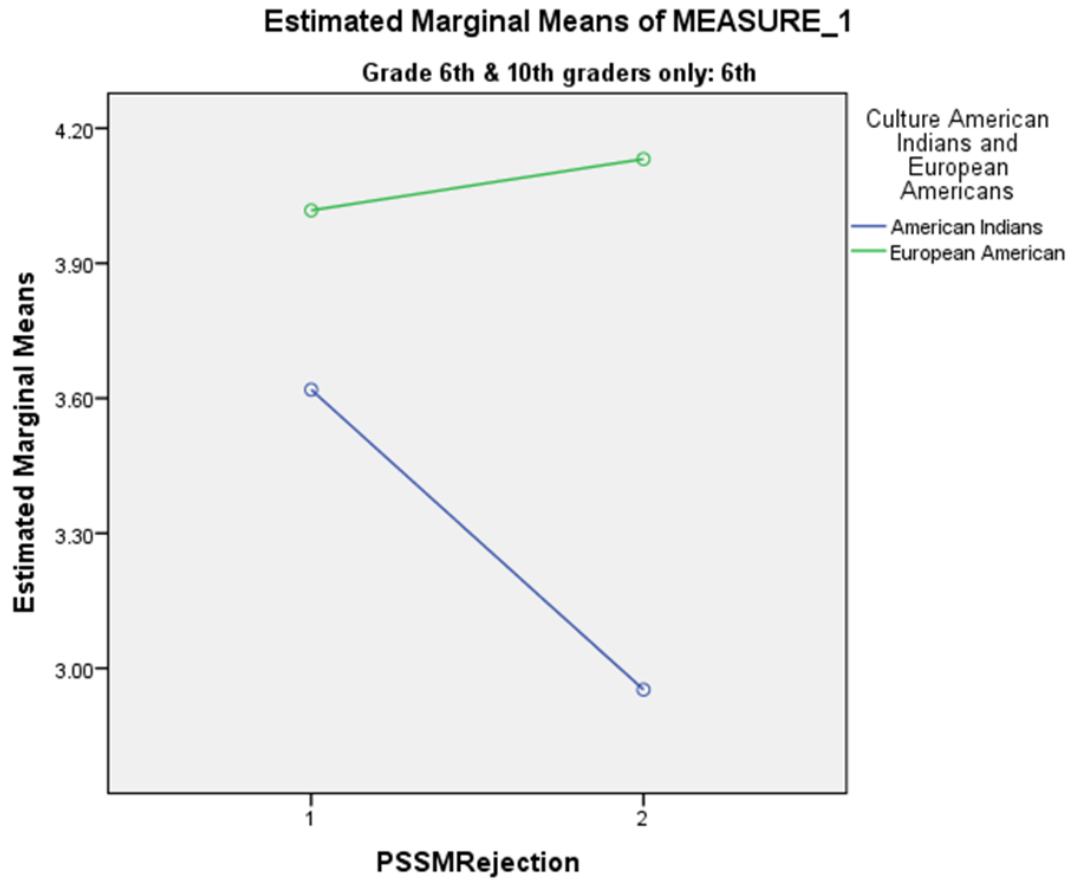


Figure 4. 6th Grade PSSM Rejection Subscale Scores-Interaction between Culture. As EA 6th grade students' feelings of rejection decreased from pre to post, AI students' feeling of rejection increased. Note that rejection scores are written in the negative and thus an increase in rejection scores indicates a decrease in feelings of rejection.

Table 1

Repeated Measures ANOVAs (Within Subjects: Pre/Post change; Between Subjects: AI/EA Culture

Scale	Pre-test		Post-test	
	AI	EA	AI	EA
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
<u>6th Grade</u>				
Total Scale**	3.67 (0.74)	3.77 (0.72)	3.32 (0.84)	3.95 (0.84)
Caring Relationship*	4.09 (0.51)	3.94 (0.81)	4.00 (0.77)	4.23 (0.75)
Acceptance	3.33 (0.82)	3.48 (0.86)	3.32 (1.17)	3.70 (0.92)
Rejection**	3.62 (1.16)	4.02 (0.96)	2.95 (1.35)	4.13 (1.12)
<u>10th Grade</u>				
Total Scale	3.30 (0.54)	3.62 (0.59)	3.36 (0.61)	3.52 (0.64)
Caring Relations***	3.65 (0.94)	3.91 (0.71)	3.98 (0.81)	3.74 (0.77)
Acceptance	2.99 (0.62)	3.37 (0.77)	3.07 (0.66)	3.22 (0.74)
Rejection	3.62 (0.83)	4.04 (0.83)	3.55 (1.01)	3.90 (0.88)

Note. AI=American Indian students; EA=Euro-American students

*p<.90, **p<.05, ***p<.01

SOBI. Eight AI and 3 EA completed the pre and post SOBI surveys. Repeated measures ANOVA's for SOBI P - General Mainstream, SOBI P- Dakota, SOBI A - General Mainstream, and SOBI - A Dakota. All main effects for pre and post scores and interactions between change scores and culture were not significant. All F's are ≤ 1.97 , p's $\geq .198$.

Qualitative

Participants

Talking circles. All students from sixth and tenth grade were offered to participate in the talking circles. Pre talking circles included a total of 21 participants. Participants were divided into talking circles by ethnicity, with two AI talking circles with eight participants each (16 total) and one EA talking circle of five participants. Post talking circles included a total of 18 participants. Again, participants were divided into groups by ethnicity, with two AI talking circles with two and six participants and one EA talking circle of six participants.

Teacher surveys. All three social studies teachers were asked to participate in pre and post surveys to evaluate their perceptions of the cultural intervention. All three teachers identified as EA, with two male and one female. The teachers identified an average mean of 13.33 years they had been teaching, with a range from 10-15 years. One teacher identified they had received specific training to work with AI students prior to receiving the curriculum teacher training.

Results

Student perceptions. The results of this study provided themes that emerged between AI and EA students in both pre cultural intervention and post cultural intervention. In order to heighten the validity of these findings, the use of thick descriptions were used to illuminate participants' experiences by utilizing their own words (Morrow, 2005). A summary of findings are found in Table 2 and Table 3.

AI – pre cultural intervention. For American Indian students, pre cultural intervention, three themes emerged that relate to Dakota visibility: Dakota Way of Life Not Valued in School; Absent or Inaccurate Representation of American Indians in Curriculum; and Suggestions for including Dakota in School Curriculum. Six themes emerged related to student's sense of belonging: American Indian Student Experiences of Racism in School; Sense of Belonging-Importance of Indian Education; Sense of Belonging with Friends; Sense of Belonging at Dakota Wicohan; Feeling a Lack of Sense of Belonging; and Affirming Dakota Identity.

Theme 1: Dakota way of life not valued in school. AI participants expressed that there exists a general lack of inclusion of Dakota cultural knowledge in school and classrooms. For example, when asked, “How is the Dakota way of life valued in school?” Participant responses included, “It’s not valued”, “Nope”, “No”. Participants also indicated that when Dakota cultural knowledge is discussed or shared in school and classrooms that fellow students devalue it. Participants shared stories of other students making jokes, laughing, and mocking to express how Dakota cultural knowledge or life ways were devalued in school. For example, a participant shared this story, “Oh yeah, and there is this kid (student) and he was laughing because there was this Dakota hoop dancer that came in and he was wearing his traditional outfit and um and he said, oh he he must not be a boy because he is wearing that skirt, and he’s like, he’s just a little girl dancing around with hoops. And I turned around and I looked at him and like I told him like like don’t say that, like if I hear it one more time, I’m like going to tell a teacher and all that stuff and I like gave him an ugly look after that cause he like, he kind of like giggled and I looked at him and he stopped and then after that he didn’t say anything”. Participants perceived these actions of others as devaluing the Dakota way of life when shared in school. For example one participant responded to how was the Dakota way of life valued in school, “Terrible, I think it was terrible”.

Theme 2: Absent or inaccurate representation of American Indians in curriculum. AI participants expressed either an absent or inaccurate representation of American Indian contributions within school curriculum. Participant responses reflected an absence of American Indian content and an emphasis on Euro-American content. For example, participants shared, “I haven’t learned about it” or “...our teacher he don’t bring up no Native stuff, he only brings up like white stuff”. Participant responses also reflected an inaccurate representation of American Indians, by provided statements such as, “sometimes they don’t like tell the right story” and “I think that sometimes they tell lies like in the books, they say oh and the whites won, it was the best thing ever, like they don’t say nothing like nothing about how probably about one or two stories there would be the Indians won, the rest, like five hundred more stories the whites won”.

Theme 3: Suggestions for including Dakota in school curriculum. AI participants also offered up suggestions for including Dakota contributions in curricula and classrooms that would support AI student's feeling more connected in school and portray American Indians positively. For example, participants stated, "um if we had like more Native videos and more things about Native I'd feel more connected" and "Yeah, and like actually show the positive things about us instead of always trying to show the negative because it kinda makes us-they always kinda try to make it seem like we started most of the wars and like... We kind of like are against them all the time when...this was kind of our place. This is our land".

Theme 4: American Indian student experiences of racism in school. AI participant responses reflected experiencing racism in school. For example, student statements included, "Yeah there is a lot of racism" and "Lotta stereotypes". Participants also identified when they were experiencing racism in school. Two examples include, "Yeah, dealt with racism last year" and "Like Native American month, that's when we get a lot of our racism". Participants also shared common experiences of racism through stories. For example, a participant shared this story, "... in eighth grade there was some kid, and this was from last year, he said that umm, that us, ... once we set up our tipi in front of the school, he said, why don't you just go in your tipi and do drugs and commit suicide in there? And I went up to him one day and I told him that that's not what we're all about like we're still here, we're still trying to learn and um I said same thing with you, like you're learning too, but all that's, like all that's gone, so we don't have to bring that up no more in front of us Dakotas like so we don't encourage ourselves to do it more so. I told him that we're just now to forget about that, and like you're really gonna say that? Yeah and um there's some Dakota teachers that so many racist like stuff like was being said and all the like Dakota's were coming in their offices and crying, it's just sad and ugly how they say".

Theme 5: Feeling a lack of sense of belonging. AI participants described a general lack of belonging in school through statements such as, "I didn't fit in", "I felt out of place", and "I don't feel like I belong". Student participants included statements of lack of belonging along with examples they experienced. Participants attributed feelings of

lack of belonging due to racial imbalances in school and classrooms. For example, one participant shared, “In... school we can hardly fit in with the other people because they are all white”. Students also attributed to feeling singled out due to curricular content. For example, one student shared, “really like they bring up the white stuff and then I sit there in the corner and then I’m like oh my gosh, I don’t feel like I belong there once all the kids are like yeah or whatever ...just throws me off”.

Theme 6: Sense of belonging: importance of Indian education. AI participants identified the Indian education room as a place of belonging. Participants expressed feeling “accepted” and “safe” in the Indian Ed room. Several participants also identified the Indian Ed room as the only place in school they felt a sense of belonging, demonstrated through statements such as, “Indian Ed, that’s it”, “Just in Indian Ed”, and “Yeah, that’s basically it, the Indian Ed room”. Participants attributed the Indian Ed room as a place of belonging or safe due to the visibility of Dakota or Indian Ed staff’s actions as evidenced in the following examples: “I’m, whenever I’m in Ruth’s room I feel safe because like she has a whole bunch of Dakota stuff um on her walls and stuff and she knows a lot about it so I learn from her too and I’m also safe because my friends are there with me”, and “...I feel safe in there, cause there’s no one to judge you in there because we are all the same cause she has just the Indian or the Natives in there to learn and all that, so don’t really have to feel that someone’s going to be mean to me”.

Theme 7: Sense of belonging with friends. AI participants identified feeling a sense of belonging with friends. Students identified feeling “happy” and “accepted” due to friends and relatives in school. For example, participant statements included, “Yeah, like our group of friends that we have” and “Hanging out with my friends and relatives kinda make me feel happy and accepted into the school”.

Theme 8: Sense of belonging at Dakota Wicohan. AI participants also identified feeling a sense of belonging at Dakota Wicohan, a Native non-profit organization that offers after-school youth programming. While Dakota Wicohan is not affiliated with the school, participants provided examples of feeling “safe” and “more comfortable”. Participants attributed their feelings of belonging at Dakota Wicohan due to being surrounded by Dakota people and cultural programming. For example, students shared, “I

feel accepted like being Dakota cause they're... trying to bring back the language you know and they're trying like get like more kids like learning around our age and even younger than us, but to that it means a lot to me and that's why I go come to this program (Dakota Wicohan)" and "I feel safe here too...because there's no white here, they can't judge you for what you say, here is like where you can be free and like no one can say, no you can't do that, you've got to go back, you don't belong here, so, this is good".

Theme 9: Affirming Dakota identity. AI participants provided statements affirming their Dakota identity. While talking about the racism and Dakota Way of Life not being valued in school AI students felt compelled to express that they are "happy" and "cool to be Native" and "like not about being mad that we're Dakota". Participants also affirmed their Dakota culture, "I love the native ways a lot", and "...like doing stuff our way". Participants also provided statements of encouragement to each other that reaffirmed positive feelings of Dakota identity. For example, one participant conveyed the following to the fellow Dakota students in the talking circle, "I just want um us girls to be strong and hang in there, like don't let um, you know the um bother you and all the racial comments that you hear, just keep on moving in life, just know that you're Dakota and that's who you are. Don't let the, like anybody else tell you wrong, okay, like just try to be strong. That's all I've got to say (clapping)".

AI – post cultural intervention. For American Indian students, post cultural intervention, four themes emerged that relate to Dakota visibility in school: Dakota Way of Life Not Valued in School; Dakota Way of Life Valued in School; Liked the Curriculum; and Feedback/suggestions on the *Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum*. Six themes emerged that relate to sense of belonging for American Indian students in school: American Indian Student Experiences of Racism in School; American Indian Student's Negative Experiences in School; Sense of Belonging-Importance of Indian Education; Sense of Belonging-Teachers Defending American Indian students; Sense of Belonging Due to Teachers Respecting/Acknowledging Aspects of Dakota Culture; and Sense of Belonging Due to Curriculum.

Theme 1: Dakota way of life not valued in school. AI participants shared examples of negative reactions of non-Native students when Dakota knowledge and

culture was shared in school and during implementation of the *Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum* in classrooms. For example, participants described instances when Dakota students shared their Dakota traditions, such as language and dancing, negative student reactions included, “everyone will laugh” and “scream out, No”. Participants expressed their belief that Dakota contributions, like the curriculum wouldn’t continue after the pilot project. For example, one student stated, “Yeah I don’t think after this curriculum thing in school we are not going to learn about it again”, as an example of how the Dakota way of life is not valued in school.

Theme 2: Dakota way of life valued in school. AI participants expressed that the Dakota way of life was valued in school by identifying a variety of situations where they felt the Dakota way of life was valued, including in classrooms, through teacher’s actions, in the Indian Ed room, through curricula, and by students being allowed to express their culture through classroom projects. The *Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum*, including supportive classroom materials (e.g., videos and language) was cited the most often as examples of how the Dakota way of life was valued. For example, one participant shared, “In social (teacher) taught us like the values and all that stuff...Same with curriculum...And the stories too”. Teacher’s actions were cited as the second most often that contributed to the Dakota way of life valued in school theme. For example, a participant shared, “In language...Like because like um (a teacher) he always like picks out what we get to read, like for...Our mini lessons and stuff and whenever we get to go on the Chrome books...And then he always picks out like Dakota books and stuff”.

Theme 3: Liked the curriculum. AI participants expressed their desire for the *Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum* to continue in school and positively described aspects of the curriculum. For example one participant shared, “I like the story one about the bird...Yeah, we got to lay down and turn off the lights and just listen to it”. Participants also shared what portions of the curriculum they liked most. One participant described this lesson, “I have another one. Um, like whenever we were um learning how it’s um, that it was unfair that the that the um, like fur traders and stuff, they tricked us into getting less and less land...It’s cause, we couldn’t they couldn’t um, cause we couldn’t read or write or understand English”.

Theme 4: Feedback/suggestions on the Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum. AI

participants most frequently discussed negative reactions to the activity that is associated with lesson 7 of the curriculum. While Lesson 7 was supposed to teach about the loss of land, it may have been re-traumatizing for Dakota students. For example, one participant shared, “and were all like, we stood up and like there’s some people Dakota and like they said just walk around the room and then the Europeans were and they were like the other half of the classroom and there’s a lot of the classroom that went over there, and I was in a little corner and like were all like walking and now the Europeans come in and they like pushed us aside and were on the door like this and then...it was, it was kind of like how the world was now, but...and it almost made me cry”. Secondly, participants expressed that the curriculum would end up focusing more on “white” people than Dakotas. This finding may be in part because of the interactive student activities with higher Euro-American student populations. For example, one participant shared, “um well we had like a couple assignments that we had to do about how like, who we are or whatever and who’s Native American and like only a little bit of the class raised their hand, but um we had to take an assignment home and I really was happy but it was more about the white people, (teacher’s) like this is all about the Dakota and I read it and I was like that’s more about the, it’s more about like the fur trade and all the Europeans and there was this one time in class um that all the Natives were, cause we pictured our room as um Minnesota once the Natives, like you know, Eastern or not and their here”. Three other comments consisted of teaching more basic information, going more into detail to further engage deeper understanding/critical thinking specifically on the historic land treaty transactions, and a suggestion for teachers to more engage their Dakota students when teaching.

Theme 5: American Indian student experiences of racism in school. AI

participants expressed experiencing racism from non-Native students in school settings, such as lunch, phy-ed, and the talent show. For example, one student shared, “It’s horrible...Well because like all the like other kids that aren’t Native at like, they always like make fun of us and stuff and they push us around and they all call us all Natives and then they all like make fun of us”. Participants also expressed feelings of unequal

treatment from teachers. For example, one participant shared this story, “Horrible for me too because everybody likes to be mean to me and also (the teacher’s) mean too because like I’m walking in the er I um accidentally skipped ICU because I didn’t know I had it and then (teacher) got me on lunch detention and the other... he skipped it too on purpose and he didn’t and he didn’t even get yelled at, or get a lunch detention”.

Theme 6: American Indian student’s negative experiences in school. AI participants described negative experiences in school with peer students. For example, one participant shared their experience, “Like, I was going to sit by them but they had a full table. So, I went to sit by another table and then some people left”. Participants also expressed that when students were picking on them that teachers either didn’t do anything or were selective when addressing peer provocation. For example, one participant shared, “Well, sometimes in Novemb- in the Dakota month Um, like whenever um, the teachers sometimes always talk, talk about it, and stuff and they don’t like, it during the classroom then they don’t then they don’t let kids be mean or anything but whenever they’re in the halls and the teachers go by, they don’t really care”.

Theme 7: Sense of belonging: importance of Indian education. AI participants expressed the importance of the Indian Ed room to their sense of belonging.” For example, participants described their belonging as, “I feel like I belong when I go in the... Indian Ed room”, “I feel belonging in there”, and “you can’t really feel misplaced”. Participants described three primary reasons why they felt belonging in the Indian Ed room. Participants identified the Indian Ed room as a place of refuge, describing it as a place “no one makes fun of you”, “don’t judge”, and “everyone has to be nice”. Participants identified the Indian Ed room as a place they could identify with as a Native students, for example, “in her room it’s...only the Native stuff” and “they’re all Natives in there”. Participants identified Indian Ed room as a place where they receive help and understanding. For example, one participant shared how the Indian Ed room is important to their belonging, “Um I feel like I belong in um like when I go in the when I go in the Indian Ed room um because they like help me and they understand like where I come from and stuff like that, they don’t like judge or anything”.

Theme 8: Sense of belonging: teachers defending American Indian students. AI participants expressed a sense of belonging when teachers defended them from negative peer interactions in classrooms. For example, participants described teacher's actions such as, "makes everyone be nice to each other" and "...like if your being racist (teacher will) take care of it right away". Participants described situations where teachers would reprimand negative or racist comments and behaviors in classrooms. For example, one participant shared their experience, "then whenever (teacher) asked me if I'd do it (share language or songs), and I said yeah... and then (student) like whenever I sat back down (student) started laughing and stuff and then (student)... said that that's funny and I said no it's not and then (student's) like yeah it is...and then (teacher) just looked at (student) and told (student) to go out in the hall".

Theme 9: Sense of belonging due to teachers respecting/acknowledging aspects of Dakota culture. AI participants indicated feeling a sense of belonging in situations when students perceived teacher's actions as understanding them as Dakota students. For example, participants expressed, "feel like I belong sometimes", "now I feel safe in (teacher's) room", and "because (teacher) really understands you and your race". Participants provided examples when students felt a sense of belonging because teachers demonstrated interest of Dakota culture. They described teacher's interest in Dakota culture when teachers asked them questions about Dakota culture, participated in Dakota community events, and asked students to share their Dakota language introductions. For example, one participant shared, "and ah my woods class, cause my ah woods teacher is actually ah taking like part in ah building traditional lacrosse sticks and he's coming out to the the event that we have were making...So he's been really getting into it too".

Theme 10: Sense of belonging due to curriculum. AI participants also expressed feeling a sense of belonging in classrooms due to the *Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum*. For example, student's stated they were "happy" when they had to do an assignment on Native Americans. Another student shared the positive impact that the curriculum was having on other students which increased their feelings of belonging, "in eighth grade especially once that guy said that we like should go like commit suicide and do drugs in a tipi that like threw me off and now that they watched the video they know that how we

think about it and how...and all that stuff, and now they kind of get it, like who we are and what we're meant to be or how we're meant to be here just like them". Participants also described how positive aspects of the curriculum made them feel accepted. For example, "I feel accepted...when I see my relatives on the videos".

EA – pre cultural intervention. For Euro-American students, pre cultural intervention, two themes emerged related to Dakota visibility: Lack of Knowledge of Dakota Way of Life and Historical Knowledge of American Indians. Two themes emerged that related to student's sense of belonging: Feeling a Sense of Belonging and Feeling a Lack of Belonging.

Theme 1: Lack of knowledge of Dakota way of life. EA participants expressed a general lack of knowledge regarding the Dakota way of life. For example, participants were asked, "...do you know what I mean when I say Dakota way of life?" Multiple participants responded "No". When participants were asked if they could remember anything about what they learned last year regarding Dakota, participants responded, "No", "Not really", and "...But they have- there's different parts um- they do things differently as we do".

Theme 2: Historical knowledge of American Indians. EA participant responses typified historical images when asked if they remember anything about Native Americans. For example, participant responses included, "spears", "weapons", "How they build tipis".

Theme 3: Feeling a sense of belonging. EA participants expressed a general feeling of belonging in school. Participant statements included, "I feel like I belong here" and "I think I belong here". Participants also felt a sense of belonging through friends, liking teachers, and peer inclusion, such as, "...they usually pick me".

Theme 4: Feeling a lack of belonging. EA participants suggested that a lack of belonging came from having a lack of friends. Participants shared, "But in school you wanna have a lot of friends...So you don't get picked on or anything and try making friends right away". Participants also discussed scenarios that indicated a lack of belonging. One participant shared, "And then like during lunch if you sit down at the

table that has a lot of people that you always thought was your friends and they just take-pick up their trays and walk away that really doesn't feel good".

EA – post cultural intervention. For Euro-American students, post cultural intervention, four themes emerged that related to Dakota visibility: Dakota Way of Life Valued in School; Knowledge of Dakota Way of Life, History, Culture; Liked the Curriculum (i.e., *Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum*); and Feedback Regarding the Curriculum. Two themes emerged that related to student's sense of belonging: Feeling a Sense of Belonging and Sense of Belonging through Teachers.

Theme 1: Dakota way of life valued in school. EA participants expressed valuing the Dakota way of life taught in school. For example, participants expressed, "Good...really important" and "It was good to learn from like the Dakota side instead of our point of view" when asked how the Dakota way of life was valued in school. Participants described instances where the school included Dakota life ways. For example, participants identified hoop dancing, drums, and food as examples of Dakota ways of life. Participants also identified the social studies class as a place where Dakota way of life was valued. One participant shared, "in Social Studies we had this video about Dakota...yeah Dakota Wicohan."

Theme 2: Knowledge of Dakota way of life, history, and culture. EA participants exhibited their own knowledge of the Dakota way of life, history, and culture. Participants were able to cite tragic historic accounts between Dakota people and whites. For example, one participant shared, "...Alexander Sibley he, like he said that um all he cares if the Native can eat their own crap and stuff like that ...And eat grass..And that's...when the people were getting paid to kill the Dakota. Participants also shared the Dakota's relationship to land. For example, one participant stated, "I think it's important because this is like, they have been here for since Minnesota became a state so...This is their homeland". Participants also expressed changed perceptions of Dakota representations and relationships between Dakota and "whites". One participant shared, "That they [Dakotas] were good people that did help the the whites, but some of the whites didn't like them. And then, but some of them did".

Theme 3: Liked the curriculum. EA participants expressed enthusiasm in regards to the curriculum, for example, “really interesting” and “liked learning about their background”. The participants suggested that the curriculum be taught in multiple grade levels.

Theme 4: Feedback regarding the curriculum. EA participants expressed dislike for specific curriculum content that portrayed “whites” negatively. For example, one participant shared, “but then other parts I didn’t like because like they were saying bad things about whites and stuff”. Participants also expressed dislike for specific curriculum content that described historic tragedies for Dakota people (e.g., the Little Crow story and Sibley story).

Theme 5: Feeling a sense of belonging. EA participants expressed a variety of situations in which they felt a sense of belonging. Two participants identified feeling a sense of belonging during group activities. For example, one participant shared, “Um that you get to do work works in the language class and you get to be in groups”. Participants also shared a sense of belonging when negative things do not happen. For example, a participant shared when “...people don’t make fun of you” and “when I’m not kicked out...and when I don’t get detention”. Participants also identified a sense of belonging through their peers, such as, “playing with friends” and “my sense of belonging was when I first made (student) laugh... Well he’s one of the famous kids”.

Theme 6: Sense of belonging through teachers. EA participants identified a sense of belonging due to teachers liking them. For example, participants stated, “(teacher’s) a big fan of me” and “Teachers like me”. Participants also identified a sense of belonging because teachers are “fun to be around” and when the “teachers help you”.

Table 2.

Experiences of AI Students

Pre Cultural Intervention (n = 16)		Post Cultural Intervention (n = 8)	
Theme	Examples	Theme	Examples
Dakota Way of Life Not Valued in	- Yeah its – not valued. (Dakota way life valued in school)	Dakota Way of Life Not Valued in	- Umm when we watch videos in like social studies and like when they’re dancing or singing,

School (15)	<p>- I had, I agree with them, like when we watch native TV shows, you know like movies in social studies, people laugh and make jokes and stuff.</p> <p>- He ran around saying “oh look at me I’m Dakota, I’m with my hoops after the hoop dance.” He’s like “oh I’m I’m native and I’m in my hoops”</p>	School (8)	<p>everyone will laugh</p> <p>- yeah I don’t think after this curriculum thing in school we are not going to learn about it again</p> <p>- And like sometimes, like whenever we’re doing the curriculum, um in Dakota class, the Dak - social studies, um, they always used to like, whenever we had to do work and stuff and look up about um, about like, whenever, they talk about war and stuff. People didn’t want to do it and they were mad and whenever we had to and stuff</p>
Absent or Inaccurate Representation of American Indians in Curriculum (16)	<p>- They haven’t even started talking about Dakotas at all, have they? Not even from first or kindergarten.</p> <p>- umm I think that sometimes they tell lies like in the books, they say oh and the whites won, it was the best thing ever, like they don’t say nothing like nothing about how probably about one or two stories there would be the Indians won, the rest, like five hundred more stories the whites won</p> <p>- When they teach you about the Dak...The Dakotas – the Dak-The Dakotas and everything, all they ever talk about is the war and...how we got moved...and put on reservations...they don’t ever talk about the way of life or like...how anything was.</p>	Dakota Way of Life Valued in School (22)	<p>- Like um, its valued cause, like the teachers more like embrace it... Yeah</p> <p>- Oh um the banner that we have in the um right in the cafeteria it has um challenge, learn and achieve in Dakota. I think they did that when we ah put up the tipi a couple of years ago</p> <p>- Um the curriculum, when we were doing it.</p> <p>- And in science we’re talking about it, and everyone we would talk about who’s first in Minnesota and they said well Christopher Columbus was the first person in the United St.. the land here. And then he said, No that’s wrong. The Natives were here first.</p>

	<p>- Like they let us watch like 9/11 but they don't show us the Dakota 38 movie</p>		<p>- ah I think like ah today, like my health teacher was saying um like how values work and like through different cultures she was saying like um how ah culture ah some um cultures like um ah how Asian culture they'd ah bring in their elders and she was saying that um Native American's like really respect their elders and stuff like that...And to show that stuff she um respected us that we do that for our elders... Yeah, so it's kind of like, made me happy that she noticed that we respect our elders...Other cultures too.</p>
<p>Suggestions for including Dakota in School Curriculum (8)</p>	<p>- um if we had like more Native videos and more things about Native I'd feel more connected</p> <p>- I think they should, um, teach more about like what- how the way of life before settlers came</p> <p>- Yeah, and like actually show the positive things about us instead of always trying to show the negative because it kinda makes us-they always kinda try to make it seem like we started most of the wars and like... We kind of like are against them all the time when...this was kind of our place. This is our land</p>	<p>American Indian Negative Experiences in School (5)</p>	<p>- Well, sometimes in Novemb- in the Dakota month Um, like whenever um, the teachers sometimes always talk, talk about it, and stuff and they don't like, it during the classroom then they don't then they don't let kids be mean or anything but whenever they're in the halls and the teachers go by, they don't really care.</p> <p>- Like. I was going to sit by them but they had a full table. So, I went to sit by another table and then some people left.</p>
<p>American Indian Student Experiences of Racism in School (16)</p>	<p>- Like Native American month, that's when we get a lot of our racism</p> <p>- Yeah, like we're just playing football with them in recess and</p>	<p>American Indian Student Experiences of Racism in School (6)</p>	<p>- It's horrible... Well because like all the like other kids that aren't Native at like, they always like make fun of us and stuff and they push us around and they all call us all Natives and then they all like make fun of us</p>

	<p>then- like we're like tearing them up, then like they started getting all racist like go- go back to your tipis and like smoke pot and go commit suicide and we'll burn down your tipis... stuff like that</p> <p>- in eighth grade there was some kid, and this was from last year, he said that umm, that us, us um, once we set up our tipi in front of the school, he said, why don't you just go in your tipi and do drugs and commit suicide in there? And I went up to him one day and I told him that that's not what were all about like we're still here, were still trying to learn and um I said same thing with you, like you're learning too, but all that's, like all that's gone, so we don't have to bring that up no more in front of us Dakotas like so we don't encourage ourselves to do it more so. I told him that we're just now to forget about that, and like you're really gonna say that? Yeah and um there's some Dakota teachers that so many racist like stuff like was being said and all the like Dakota's were coming in their offices and crying, it's just sad and ugly how they say.</p>		<p>- Um horrible too, so, yeah, we like don't get treated as good as the like we don't get treated always like the whites do</p>
<p>Sense of Belonging: Importance of Indian Education (13)</p>	<p>- I feel accepted in Ruth's room because everybody's really nice and everybody's Dakota in there and there's no, I'm not saying this is to be racist but but there is no white people in there to make fun of what we talk about or what we look like or anything</p> <p>- Indian Ed, that's it (where I feel a sense of belonging)</p>	<p>Sense of Belonging: Importance of Indian Education (8)</p>	<p>- um I feel belonging in there (Indian Ed) because nobody makes fun of you and nobodies like to tell you wrong or anything</p> <p>- Um I feel like I belong in um like when I go in the when I go in the Indian Ed room um because they like help me and they understand like where I come from and stuff like that, they don't</p>

			like judge or anything.
Sense of Belonging with Friends (5)	<p>- Hanging out with my friends and relatives kinda make me feel happy and accepted into the school</p> <p>- ah once my friend...I was really happy once I said my introduction cause that's like the main key you have to know to like introduce yourself to people, and I told her and she like she told other people to say it, but they they actually liked it, they said oh that's that's like really cool that you can do that and they were really interested at that time and I knew that they're really good friends cause they didn't make fun of me or any of that stuff, they really liked it.</p>	Sense of Belonging: Teachers Defending American Indian Students (8)	<p>- Like whenever um, like when the kids make fun of the Dakota people, they always say, Knock it off. And th, they always say, knock it off, how would you feel like it if they talked about you like that?</p> <p>- then in language he always like talks like cause we're reading this book with Natives and this and then this boy he always like makes fun us and stuff and then (the teacher) will yell at him and send him to the office sometimes or put him out in the hall</p> <p>- (A teacher), because she really understands you and your race and she like if your being racist she'll take care of it right away</p>
Sense of Belonging at Dakota Wicohan (4)	- I feel accepted like being Dakota cause they're they're trying to bring back the language you know and they're trying like get like more kids like learning around our age and even younger than us, but to that it means a lot to me and that's why I go come to this program (Dakota Wicohan)	Sense of Belonging: Sense of Belonging due to Teachers respecting/acknowledgin g aspects of the Dakota culture (6)	<p>- ah my woods class, cause my ah woods teacher is actually ah taking like part in ah building traditional lacrosse sticks and he's coming out to the the event that we have were making...So he's been really getting into it too</p> <p>- okay, I feel like good in (teacher's) room cause one day he yelled at me, but then he told me to come out for lunch just to finish our assignment and I told him that I couldn't like focus and all that and now I feel like safe in his room because he knows that what I, cause I told him like ah what was going on, now he, and I told him ah like that I was Dakota and all that stuff and he was like oh</p>

			it's gonna be like, it would be nice if you like can say your introduction in class and I said yeah I can do that and I just now like yeah, I feel safe in that room.
Feeling a Lack of Sense of Belonging (5)	- really like they bring up the white stuff and then I sit there in the corner and then I'm like oh my gosh, I don't feel like I belong there once all the kids are like yeah or whatever just throws me off	Sense of Belonging due to Curriculum (4)	<p>- in eighth grade especially once that guy said that we like should go like commit suicide and do drugs in a tipi that like threw me off and now that they watched the video they know that how we think about it and how...and all that stuff, and now they kind of get it, like who we are and what were meant to be er how were meant to be here just like them.</p> <p>- um I feel accepted when we're in classrooms and when we watch videos and people don't laugh and um I feel accepted there and when I see my relatives on the videos</p>
Affirming Dakota Identity (8)	<p>- Before I can forget, like it, some people are saying oh it's not good to be native, well we're happy to be native, because we're us and we like doing stuff our way, if you don't like it, then don't even care about it, don't even worry...yeah</p> <p>- I just want um us girls to be strong and hang in there, like don't let um, you know the um bother you and all the racial comments that you hear, just keep on moving in life, just know that you're Dakota and that's who you are. Don't let the, like anybody else tell you wrong, okay, like just try to be strong. That's all I've got to say. (clapping)</p>		

		Liked the Curriculum (6)	<p>- Yeah, continue with it.</p> <p>- I have another one. Um, like whenever we were um learning how it's um, that it was unfair that the that the um, like fur traders and stuff, they tricked us into getting less and less land...It's cause, we couldn't they couldn't um, cause we couldn't read or write or understand English And so yeah.</p>
		Feedback/suggestions on the Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum (10)	<p>- like, like, it's like what they said, they let us, (teacher) just let us roam around and then we got to the last part when we had to go the stage thing in the back of our room, and if you stepped off the stage, they'd come up and say, get off my land and they'd push you back up on the stage, yeah.</p> <p>...I didn't like that, I didn't</p> <p>- Probably talking more about the Dakota than how, how whenever the fur traders came and the, and the Europeans and stuff. And so yeah....Like, like what I mean about talking more about Dakota is like, tell more things more like, things to instead of like, cause they must've went and, like they mostly told more like more about tell about the how and everything the Europeans came and stuff. How they took over the land and they just think, like (teacher) barely even put in like... barely talked about the Dakotas that much and whenever we were, and then that, in that lesson.</p> <p>(Interviewer: Okay, so more about</p>

			<p>what was going on with the Dakota, that time during the fur trade</p> <p>... Yeah</p>
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Table 3

Experiences of EA Students

Pre Cultural Intervention (n = 5)		Post Cultural Intervention (n = 6)	
Theme	Example	Theme	Example
Lack of Knowledge of Dakota Way of Life (5)	<p>- [Interviewer: How is the Dakota way of life valued in school? (long pause) So do you know what I mean when I say Dakota way of life?] No. (Stated by multiple participants)</p>	Dakota Way of Life Valued in School (8)	<p>- It was good to learn from like the Dakota side instead of our point of view</p> <p>- (Dakota way of Life) Good...Really important</p> <p>- In Social Studies we had this video about Dakota...yeah Dakota Wicohan</p>
Historical Knowledge of American Indians (5)	<p>- (Interviewer: Do you remember anything about the Native Americans that you've learned in school?) Their weapons</p> <p>- All the spears</p>	Knowledge of Dakota Way of Life, History, & Culture (9)	<p>- I think it's important because this is like, they have been here for sense Minnesota became a state so...This is their homeland.</p> <p>- That the That they were good people that did help the the whites, but some of the whites didn't like them. And then, but some of them did</p>

			<p>- Um like when they said in the movie ah the ah the guy they guy that said ah Henry Sibley he, like he said that um all he cares if the Native can eat their own crap and stuff like that ...And eat grass..And that's when and when the people were getting paid to kill the Dakota</p>
Feeling a Sense of Belonging (7)	<p>- I feel like I belong here 'cause I have a lot of friends and...yeah</p> <p>- When they're playing football, they usually pick me</p>	Feeling a Sense of Belonging (7)	<p>- When we get to be in groups</p> <p>- Um I don't know, like when you like get something wrong people like don't like make fun of you</p>
Feeling a Lack of Belonging (6)	<p>- They go make rumors, how like, there's this girl in our grade that everybody thinks she's so bad but they haven't talked to her or like there was these kids that made up this touch, like the cheese touch from Diary of a Wimpy Kid, but it's a person touch, like if somebody got touched from this girl they, um, go touch someone else and say it and then cross their fingers</p> <p>- But in school you wanna have a lot of friends so you don't get picked on or anything and try making friends right away.</p>	Sense of Belonging through Teachers (7)	<p>- Teachers like me</p> <p>- Um when you need help and the teachers help you</p>
		Liked the Curriculum (11)	<p>Can it be like seventh and tenth next year?</p> <p>- Maybe if they don't choose to do this next year I, I don't know, it's ah I'm just I'm trying to figure out what's wrong with them, this is a great curriculum.</p>

		Feedback/suggestions on the Mni Sota Makoce Curriculum (5)	<p>-but then other parts I didn't like because like they were saying bad things about whites and stuff</p> <p>-Um like when they said in the movie ah the ah the guy they guy that said ah ??? Alexander Sibley he, like he said that um all he cares if the Native can eat their own crap and stuff like that</p> <p>And eat grass... And that's when and when the people were getting paid to kill the Dakota</p> <p>(Interviewer: that was something that you liked about learning?)</p> <p>No I didn't</p>
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Teacher Perceptions. The results of this study provided general ratings indicated by teacher surveys. Results are intended to provide evaluative suggestions measuring how well teachers perceived external support, internal capacity, storytelling methodology's effectiveness, expanding the story's effectiveness, and supporting student sense of belonging to adequately deliver the curriculum and meet Minnesota social studies standards.

External Support. Questions 1, 3, and 5 were analyzed together in order to assess how teachers perceived the level of support in meeting the new social studies standards from external resources. External resources were defined as school systems and resources, administrative leadership, and AI community relationships. All areas of external support increased by .34 from pre at 4.67 to post at 5.0.

Internal Capacity. Questions 2 and 4 were analyzed together to assess how teachers' perceptions of their own ability to teach the curriculum with confidence to meeting the new social studies standards. Internal capacities were defined as, their classroom, materials, and training. All areas of internal capacity increased by .34 from 4.67 (Q2) to 5.0 and 4.33 (Q4) to 4.67.

Storytelling Methodology. Questions 6, 7, and 8 were analyzed together in order to assess teachers' perceptions of the importance, use, and effectiveness of diverse teaching methods. Diverse teaching methods were defined as the use of storytelling. There was no change in how teachers perceived the importance of using diverse methods (remained at 5.0 or A lot). However, teacher use of storytelling increased by 1.34, from 3.33 (Q7) to 4.67 and their perceptions of its effectiveness increased by 1.34 from 3.67 (Q8) to 5.0.

Expanding Story. Questions 9 and 10 were analyzed together in order to assess teachers' feelings of optimism and perceptions of improving learner outcomes through expanding and diversifying stories. Teachers' feelings of optimism increased from 4.0 to 4.67 and teachers' perceptions of improving learner outcomes increased from 4.67 to 5.0.

Sense of Belonging. Questions 11 and 12 were analyze together in order to assess teachers' perceptions that expanding the story would increase students' SOB and that SOB would increase learner outcomes. Teachers perceptions that story will increase SOB decreased from 4.33 to 3.67. In other words, teacher's beliefs that expanding the diversity of stories to increase students' SOB decreased. However, teachers continued to feel that SOB has a lot (5.0) of significant influence on learner outcomes.

CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSION

Exploring the influence of a cultural intervention on sense of belonging for American Indian students is important to the education field. A persistent achievement gap continues between AI students and their peers. Sense of belonging and its influence on student achievement has been established (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Leadership within American Indian communities have been calling for authentic partnerships with schools, as well as proclaiming the need for CBE. However, there exists little research in determining the impact of a cultural intervention that utilizes a CBE approach on sense of belonging for AI students. This pilot study explored a cultural intervention (i.e., culturally based curriculum) and its influence on AI student's sense of belonging through questionnaires (PSSM and SOBI) and student perceptions (talking circles). Additionally, this study acquired teacher perceptions on the use of an Indigenous teaching and learning methodology (i.e., storytelling) and Indigenous narrative (i.e., Dakota story) and their ability on meeting Minnesota's new social studies standards.

This culturally based curriculum's foundation was built upon Dakota voice and storytelling. The inclusion of Dakota voice disrupted the mainstream narrative by including the critical dialogue and stories of experienced oppression (Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Dixon & Rousseau, 2005). The curriculum also included stories of resiliency, emphasizing the cultural strengths of Dakota people, instead of passively being portrayed as faceless victims.

Summary of Findings

The school environment: Pre cultural intervention. It is important to first consider the context of which the cultural intervention was introduced. According to AI student perceptions before the cultural intervention was introduced, the school environment did not value the Dakota way of life (15 statements). AI students also indicated that there was either an absence of or inaccurate representations of American Indians in school (16 statements). These finding align with the EA student perceptions, in that there was either a general lack of knowledge of the Dakota way of life (5 statements) or their knowledge was only related to historical representations of American Indians (5 statements). EA students' perceptions indicated no distinction between American Indians in general and

Dakota people, (i.e., their specific tribal neighbors). These findings are in alignment with current literature in that Native Americans in social studies and history classes are often described in stereotypical and inaccurate depictions or only in negative descriptions where they are viewed as an obstacle to western progress (e.g., wars) (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Wills, 1994). The absent and inaccurate representation of AIs in curricula suggested a lack of self-relevant representations which sent subtle messages that AI students do not belong (Fryberg & Leavitt, 2014; Fryberg & Townsend, 2008). Furthermore, the invisibility and limited representations of AIs as homogenized, historic, and stereotypical depictions, harm AI students in that it creates a lack of belonging and the belief that they cannot succeed (Fryberg & Leavitt; Leavitt, Covarrubias, Perez, & Fryberg, 2015). In this study, prior to the cultural intervention, AI students reported feeling a lack of sense of belonging (5 statements) and made (16) statements regarding their experiences of racism in school. In fact, AI students in pre talking circles, needed to reassure each other and affirm their Dakota identity (8 statements) because they had experienced so much racism, lack of sense of belonging, and an absence of Dakota representation in the curriculum.

Question 1: Did the cultural intervention influence sense of belonging? Prior to the cultural intervention, AI students reported experiencing a sense of belonging only due to the importance of Indian Education (13 statements), with friends (5 statements), and at Dakota Wicohan (4). This finding aligns with literature in that AI students found a sense of belonging due to in-group belonging within racially homogeneous environments (Wu, Hou, & Schimmele, 2011). However, following the cultural intervention, in addition to the importance of Indian Education (8 statements), AI students indicated that they had a sense of belonging because teachers defended AI students (8 statements), teachers respected/acknowledged aspects of the Dakota culture (6 statements), and due to the curriculum (4 statements). These results suggest that AI students began feeling an increased sense of belonging following the cultural intervention. Additionally, AI student's experiences of racism decreased from pre (16 statements) to post (6 statements). Fryberg and Leavitt (2014) contend that AI students who draw upon their culture, gain strength against discrimination and other negative factors they experience in school.

Findings in this project support this idea, whereby AI students identified sense of belonging through additional settings that supported their culture. However, post cultural intervention a new theme emerged as Negative Experiences in School (5 statements), which suggest a possibility that some of the racist experiences may have been downgraded to negative experiences in school.

Overwhelmingly AI students in the talking circles reported a greater sense of belonging post cultural intervention and believe the Dakota Way of Life is now being valued in the school. For example, post cultural intervention the number of statements regarding Dakota Way of Life Not Valued in School decreased from 15 to 8 statements and a new theme Dakota Way of Life Valued in School (22 statements) emerged. This new theme was the largest theme both pre and post cultural intervention. Furthermore, prior to the cultural intervention AI students made suggestions for how Dakota perspectives and story should be incorporated into the curriculum. Following the cultural intervention no such theme emerged more than likely because Dakotas were being represented in the curriculum. Additionally, in the pre talking circles AI students needed to affirm their Dakota Identity because they had experienced so much racism, lack of sense of belonging, and an absence in the curriculum. No such theme emerged post cultural intervention because AI students received that affirmation from the cultural intervention and the teachers. This finding suggests that AI students began feeling a sense of belonging because the Dakota way of life was now being valued in school.

Perceptions of EA students aligned with the AI students' perceptions in that the Dakota way of life was valued in school. Following the cultural intervention, the themes Dakota way of life valued in school (8 statements) and knowledge of Dakota way of life, history, and culture (9 statements) emerged for EA students, whereas no such themes emerged in pre talking circles. This finding supports the idea that AI students began feeling a sense of belonging because the Dakota way of life was now being valued in school.

While no main effect in sense of belonging was observed from pre to post for students when examining the PSSM scale, there was a change from pre to post when looking at the PSSM x cultural interaction. As EA students' PSSM increased, AI

students' PSSM decreased from pre to post intervention. The increase in EA students' sense of belonging aligns with literature that indicates when multicultural education is introduced, EAs experience the most growth and understanding because of their prior emphasis in mono-cultural experiences (Denson, 2009; Sleeter, 2011). Furthermore, the qualitative results of this study help explain the decrease in AI student PSSM scores.

While AI student's perceptions of the Dakota way of life not valued in school decreased from 15 statements pre cultural intervention to 8 statements post cultural intervention, the experiences shared by AI students in post talking circles reflected how the Dakota way of life was not valued predominantly during implementation of the curriculum in classrooms. AI students indicated that some non-Native students exhibited negative behavior and comments about the curriculum and used this as an opportunity to engage in racist behavior. This negative behavior may have contributed to AI student's increased feelings of rejection and disrespect (PSSM rejection) post cultural intervention and thus contributed to their overall lower sense of belonging (PSSM). Teacher perceptions also support this conclusion. Teachers from pre to post cultural intervention decreased their belief that expanding the diversity of stories (i.e., including Dakota story) would lead to an increase in students' sense of belonging. AI students indicated that teachers witnessed some of the negative comments made by EA students regarding the curriculum, and thus may have noticed the negative impact these comments had on AI students. The result does not suggest that the curriculum should be discontinued but rather that more education is needed regarding how the Dakota way life could be integrated into the school so it becomes the norm and not something to be targeted.

Results suggest that for AI 10th grade students' Caring Relationship scores went up whereas EA's scores went down. Qualitative results suggest this may have occurred because teachers began defending AI students. Research suggests that classroom environments that promote respect and are psychologically safe, serve as protective measures against declining sense of belonging levels (Anderman, 2003).

The lack of significant results regarding the SOBI were not surprising, given the low number of participants. The SOBI survey was collected at the same time that the Suicide Ideation Questionnaire was being gathered. Anecdotal information suggests that a

community stigma regarding suicide exists, especially for AI students. This information is not surprising, given the high suicide rates the AI community has experienced.

In summary, quantitative results suggest that AI 6th grade students' PSSM decreased as a result of feeling a greater sense of rejection (PSSM Rejection) post cultural intervention. The qualitative data sheds light on this finding. AI students indicated that some non-Native students made negative comments about the curriculum and used this as an opportunity to engage in racist behavior, thus AI students experienced increased feelings of rejection. However, overwhelmingly AI students in the talking circles reported a greater sense of belonging post cultural intervention because teachers defended them and respected/acknowledged aspects of their Dakota culture and believe that Dakota way of life is now being valued in the school.

Question 2: Does the culturally-based curriculum meet Minnesota's new social studies standards?

Teachers continued to see the importance of using diverse teaching methods to support meeting Minnesota's new social studies standards that require the contributions of American Indians. As expected, teacher's use of storytelling in the classroom increased from somewhat to almost a lot. Teachers increased their belief that storytelling was an effective teaching method.

Teachers felt more optimistic about expanding the story of history post cultural intervention. Teachers increased their belief that by expanding the diversity of story, learner outcomes would improve. While teachers continued to perceive that sense of belonging has a significant influence on learner outcomes, their perceptions that expanding the story actually leads to increased sense of belonging decreased. This finding may be due to the negative and racist feedback directed towards AI students by non-Native students which occurred during implementation of the curriculum.

In summary, the results of teacher perceptions suggest that both the use of storytelling as a teaching and learning methodology and the expansion of diverse story will continue to be implemented in their classrooms. Both the external and internal supports increased post cultural intervention to implement the culturally-based

curriculum. Teacher's confidence in meeting Minnesota's new social studies standards also increased.

Both EA and AI students indicated they liked the curriculum and agreed that the curriculum should continue to be taught in school. In fact, one EA student stated, "I really like it because it's new and interesting and I am tired of learning about the civil and revolutionary war". The fact that EA students liked the curriculum and thought, "It was good to learn from like the Dakota side instead of our point of view", aligns with the idea that students are tired of learning about white people all the time (Ford & Harris, 2000). These findings are important because students sense of belonging increases when they perceive academic work as interesting, important and useful (Anderman, 2003). Furthermore, students felt the curriculum should be expanded to include more grades. Both EA and AI students provided feedback and suggestions regarding the curriculum. This information will be taken into consideration in order to improve the curriculum and support future statewide dissemination.

Recommendations

The findings of this project suggest the need for schools to increase the visibility of positive, contemporary, and accurate representations and contributions of American Indians in curricula. More importantly, schools need to include the contributions of their local tribal community. Including the unique contributions of local tribal communities demonstrates respect to those communities of whose lands they are seated on. Teacher training and development programs need to include the ability to accurately teach about Indigenous peoples (Haynes Writer, 2008). The findings of this research suggest that there is significant value in including self-relevant representations of AI students' sense of belonging. The inclusion of self-relevant representations are important because until one resolves where they are situated in social settings, the member will have difficulty focusing on present needs (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1992). In other words, academic and educational aims will not be a priority for those youth with a lack of sense of belonging, or those dealing with racism. Fryberg et al (2013) assert that when moving from a deficit context in addressing the academic achievement gap, education leaders need to seek the inclusion of cultural representation of American Indians in classrooms. Overall, schools

need to investigate how they might be providing subtle cues that suggest AI students do not belong and abandon the idea that AI students are just not motivated which contributes to the academic disparities (Fryberg & Leavitt, 2014). Banks (2015) argues that multicultural education cannot be the inclusion of content of diverse peoples alone; school transformation must include learning styles, goals, norms, and culture of schools, attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of teachers and leadership, teaching materials, and curriculum. Although multicultural education is not enough on its own, many argue that a new curriculum that furthers antiracist pedagogy is a good place to start in the multicultural education reform process (Banks; Chandler & McKnight, 2009).

The findings also suggest the need for schools to address policies and practices aimed at eliminating racism. Literature indicates the important role of multi-cultural and racial text within curriculum in addressing racism (Chandler & McKnight, 2009; Pinar et al, 2008; Sleeter, 2011; Spring 2012). CRT helps us move assumptions that the AI academic achievement gap is due to individual or community socio-cultural deficits to understanding the need to addressing the racial and power structures within our educational institutions (Coleman & Stevenson, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2000). Dewey (1958) has long asserted that school is social and that learning happens within student relationships and interactions. Therefore, school leadership, including administrators and teachers are responsible for supporting school membership especially for racially diverse students in order to facilitate academic achievement (Dewey, 1958; Sanchez, Colon, & Esparza, 2005).

Students in mainstream education, including AI students requires they assimilate to a cultural framework that reflects middle-class Euro-Americans in order to succeed (Fryberg & Markus, 2007). Thus, racially diverse students are forced to acquire a “second curriculum” that they must master in order to fit in (Strayhorn, 2012). Education policy makers and education leaders need to consider a broader focus to include socio-cultural concepts that greatly influence school practices. There is a need to better understand how schools inadvertently support dominant values through school systems and structures (e.g., curriculum, school calendar, diversity of teachers, etc.) (Pearce, 2012). Fryberg and Leavitt (2014) contend that educational leaders have an obligation to address eliminating

negative stereotypes and expand curriculum so that all students perceive it self-relevant, so as to increase sense of belonging and increase academic success. For example, Coleman and Stevenson (2013) suggest that school leadership provide training to teachers on how to effectively manage racial tension and conflicts in schools. DiAngelo and Sensoy (2010) suggest teachers go further by engaging in critical multicultural education training that includes self-awareness where one's worldview is challenged, and where they are engaged in uncomfortable concepts such as prejudice and privilege. Furthermore, Sleeter (2011) suggests that multicultural studies be integrated throughout curricula and not serve as a separate subject, which often perpetuates negative stereotypes or undermines the value of multiculturalism.

The findings also suggest a need to conduct further research. For example, this project would garner more confirmatory findings if the intervention was studied longitudinally. Longitudinal studies are especially needed in communities with firmly entrenched racial tension.

Delimitations

In this study, the population was limited to AI students with a comparison to EA students. AI students have little to no improvement in the academic achievement gap in Minnesota or nationally. While very few states require the inclusion of American Indian contributions in academic standards, Minnesota schools are now required to include AI contributions within their curricula.

This study was limited in the number of research questions. Since sense of belonging has been identified as a significant factor in academic success, the study explored the influence a cultural intervention would have on AI students' sense of belonging. Additionally, the inclusion of a secondary question was limited to teacher perceptions through a survey because to date, the legislative requirement addressing AI contributions in academic standards has yet to include standardized evaluative measures.

This project was limited to study the cultural intervention in only one school because the project had limited funding. Furthermore, the school partner determined the curriculum would be piloted in only the 6th and 10th grade social studies classrooms. The development of the cultural intervention required the evaluation of its effectiveness to

determine what aspects of the curriculum worked well and what requires further improvement. The evaluators of this study were teachers and students. The results of this study, combined with additional evaluative components gathered through the broader study will contribute to the final development and future dissemination of the curriculum.

Limitations

The design of this study did not control for other factors that may have influenced sense of belonging.

The qualitative results of this study are limited by the validity measures taken during analysis. While several measures were taken (e.g., bracketing, triangulation, auditor), qualitative results are limited by the very nature of qualitative research.

This study is also limited by its relatively low number of participants. For example, the number of students that opted in to participate in talking circles could not be managed as it was done voluntarily.

Suggestions for Future Research

The replication of this project in multiple schools across the state that vary in size, demographics, and environments would support further understanding of the influence of a cultural intervention on sense of belonging. Additionally, the exploration of diverse cultural interventions, beyond social studies curricula would add to the field of education and begin to address the educational disparities between AI students and other students. Additionally, a longitudinal project studying the influence of the curriculum on sense of belonging and other correlates would further the discussion on CBE and its impact on AI student's education.

Post Script

The stars shone brightly above the ridge that looked out over the valley of the *Mni Sota Wakpa*. *Utuhu Can Cistinna* felt wrapped in the glow of her ancient ancestors bringing her a sense of peace that evening. She had just returned from a gathering to support the development of an Indigenous Youth Research Center. She felt akin to the group of leaders who were gathering around this initiative. She thought about how the Indian community were tired of all the negative statistics about their youth and people and in fact, she and others believed the body of deficit-based research was actually contributing to the problem. That day a renewed sense of hope emerged, and would welcome a much needed restful sleep. Weeks earlier, she had tossed and turned for nights after she and her research partner had repeatedly analyzed the quantitative results of the

research. Had she and her Dakota colleagues made things worse for the Dakota students? Her heart jumped now thinking about what Chairwoman Vizenor had shared, “It’s tragic to experience discrimination. It’s tragic to experience prejudice. But what’s most tragic is not to exist at all...to be invisible” (Native Youth Alliance of Minnesota, 2015). Yes, it is, Utuhu Can Cistinna thought. And so did the Dakota students.

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Appendix A – The Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) Scale

1. I feel like a real part of (name of school).
2. People here notice when I'm good at something.
3. It is hard for people like me to be accepted here. (*reversed*)
4. Other students in this school take my opinions seriously.
5. Most teachers at (name of school) are interested in me.
6. Sometimes I feel as if I don't belong here. (*reversed*)
7. There's at least one teacher or other adult in this school I can talk to if I have a problem.
8. People at this school are friendly to me.
9. Teachers here are not interested in people like me. (*reversed*)
10. I am included in lots of activities at (name of school).
11. I am treated with as much respect as other students.
12. I feel very different from most other students here. (*reversed*)
13. I can really be myself at this school.
14. The teachers here respect me.
15. People here know I can do good work.
16. I wish I were in a different school. (*reversed*)
17. I feel proud of belonging to (name of school).
18. Other students here like me the way I am.

Appendix A. From "The Psychological Sense of School Membership among Adolescents: Scale development and educational correlates," by C. Goodenow, 1993, *Psychology in the Schools*, 30, pp. 79-90. Copyright 2006 by John Wiley and Sons. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix B – Sense of Belonging Instrument- Psychological Score & Antecedent

1. I often wonder if there is any place on earth where I really fit in.
2. I am just not sure if I fit in with my friends.
3. I would describe myself as a misfit in most social situations.
4. I generally feel that people accept me. (reverse scored)
5. I feel like a piece of a jigsaw puzzle that doesn't fit in the puzzle.
6. I would like to make a difference to people or things around me, but I don't feel that what I have to offer is valued.
7. I feel like an outsider in most situations.
8. I am troubled by feeling like I have no place in this world.
9. I could disappear for days and it wouldn't matter to my family.
10. In general, I don't feel a part of the mainstream of society.
11. I feel like I observe life rather than participate in it.
12. If I died tomorrow, very few people would come to my funeral.
13. I feel like a square peg trying to fit into a round hole.
14. I don't feel that there is any place where I really fit in this world.
15. I am uncomfortable knowing that my background and experiences are so different from those who are usually around me.
16. I could not see or call my friends for days and it wouldn't matter to them.
17. I feel left out of things.
18. I am not valued by or important to my friends.
19. It is important to me that I am valued or accepted by others.
20. In the past, I have felt valued and important to others.
21. It is important to me that I fit somewhere in this world.
22. I have qualities that can be important to others.
23. I am working on fitting in better with those around me.
24. I want to be a part of things going on around me.
25. It is important to me that my thoughts and opinions are valued.
26. Generally, other people recognize my strengths and good points.
27. I can make myself fit in anywhere.
28. All of my life I have wanted to feel like I really belonged somewhere.
29. I don't have the energy to work on being a part of things. (reverse scored)
30. Fitting in with people around me matters a great deal.
31. I feel badly if others do not value or accept me.
32. Relationships take too much energy for me. (reverse scored)
33. I just don't feel like getting involved with people. (reverse scored)

Appendix B. From “Developing a Measure of Sense of Belonging,” by B. Hagerty & K. Patusky, 1995, *Nursing Research*, 44, pp. 9-13. Copyright 1995 by Wolters Kluwer Health. Reprinted with permission.

Appendix C - Question Route for Dakota Talking Circles

Opening Question:

1. At this time, we would like each of you to say your first name or pseudonym, your age, and something you do for fun in your free time.

Introductory Questions:

2. Please describe your general experience of being an American Indian student in the school system.

We want to hear as many stories as possible. It doesn't matter if your story is just like someone else's or you feel like it is not important, we are interested in your unique experience.

Transition Question:

3. In thinking about your own experiences, can you describe a situation in which you felt a sense of belonging or connectedness in school?

Key Questions:

4. How is the Dakota way of life valued in school?
5. In what ways are Dakota people represented in the curriculum.
6. What is your sense of belonging in the classroom?
7. What are your feelings of connectedness in the classroom?

Ending Questions:

8. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding your experiences of sense of belonging, connectedness, and/or visibility of Dakota people in the school system? Any additional insight you have to offer is helpful to our research and genuinely appreciated.
9. (*observer*) Today you shared several experiences. Some of you said...
10. What are some themes you heard from one another's experiences?
11. Do you feel like we missed any key points?

Appendix D – Question Route for Non-Native Talking Circles

Opening Question:

1. At this time, we would like each of you to say your first name or pseudonym, your age, and something you do for fun in your free time.

Introductory Questions:

2. Please describe your general experience of being a student in the school system.

We want to hear as many stories as possible. It doesn't matter if your story is just like someone else's or you feel like it is not important, we are interested in your unique experience.

Transition Question:

3. In thinking about your own experiences, can you describe a situation in which you felt a sense of belonging or connectedness in school?

Key Questions:

4. How is the Dakota way of life valued in school?
5. In what ways are Dakota people represented in the curriculum.
6. What is your sense of belonging in the classroom?
7. What are your feelings of connectedness in the classroom?

Ending Questions:

8. Is there anything else that you would like to share regarding your experiences of sense of belonging, connectedness, and/or visibility of Dakota people in the school system? Any additional insight you have to offer is helpful to our research and genuinely appreciated.
9. (*observer*) Today you shared several experiences. Some of you said...
10. What are some themes you heard from one another's experiences?
11. Do you feel like we missed any key points?

Appendix E – Teacher Survey Questions

1. My school has the necessary structures, systems, and resources to fully meet the requirements of the new social studies standards.
2. My classroom, including curriculum content and materials, adequately supports meeting the requirements of the new social studies standards.
3. I feel that the administration and school board of my district support my efforts to implement the new curriculum.
4. I have had the necessary training to confidently teach students the new social studies standards.
5. As a teacher, I have community resources, including relationships with the Dakota and/or American Indian community to support teaching with authenticity and cultural competency.
6. I understand the importance of using diverse teaching methodologies and strategies to enhance meeting the new social studies standards.
7. I have utilized storytelling as a teaching methodology in my classroom.
8. I have found storytelling to be an effective teaching method.
9. I feel optimistic about expanding the story of Minnesota and US history in the social studies classroom.
10. I believe all student learning outcomes will improve as we expand the diversity of stories taught in the classroom.
11. I believe expanding the diversity of stories in the classroom increases students' sense of belonging.
12. Student sense of belonging in the classroom has significant influence on learner outcomes.